COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Volume V SPRING 1953 Number 2

From Aristotle to Pseudo-Aristotle. By Bernard Weinberg 97

Alcestis and *The Cocktail Party*. By Robert B. Heilman 105

Chinese Literature in the Context of World Literature. By James Robert Hightower 117

Ulyssean Qualities in Joyce's Leopold Bloom. By W. B. Stanford 125

Oscar Levertin: Swedish Critic of French Realism. By Eleanor E. Murdock 137

Stefan George et le symbolisme français. By Curt von Faber du Faur 151

Book Reviews 167

Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, ed. by W. P. Friederich and Horst Frenz (Arnold H. Rowbotham). *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, by Harold C. Goddard (Hoyt Trowbridge). *Aspectos da literatura barroca*, by Afrânio Coutinho (Lowry Nelson, Jr.). *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, by Ernst Robert Curtius (Robert L. Politzer). *Überlieferung und Gestaltung. Theophil Spoerri zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Fredi Chiappelli). *Amerika und England im deutschen, österreichischen und schweizerischen Schrifttum der Jahre 1945-1949*, by Richard Mönnig (Lawrence M. Price). *Russki Evropeets: Materialy dlia biografii i kharakteristiki Kniazia P. B. Kozlovskogo*, by Gleb Struve (Herbert E. Bowman). *Les Dits et récits de mythologie française*, by Henri Dontenville (Marcel Françon). *Humanitas christiana, Geschichte des christlichen Humanismus*, by Josef Sellmair (Elio Gianturco). *James Joyce*, by Italo Svevo (Karl Ludwig Selig). *La Littérature comparée*, by F.-M. Guyard; *Bibliographie générale de littérature comparée, Années 1949-1950* (Calvin S. Brown). *Aspects littéraires du mysticisme philosophique et l'influence de Boehme et Swedenborg au début du romantisme*, by Jacques Roos (George Harper).

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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

VOLUME V SPRING 1953 NUMBER 2

FROM ARISTOTLE TO PSEUDO-ARISTOTLE

BERNARD WEINBERG

ONE of the main problems of the Renaissance was the discovery and interpretation of the texts of classical antiquity. In the restricted domain of literary theory, the point of concentration of the problem was the text of Aristotle's *Poetics*. I do not mean that this was the only text expounded, commented on, and argued by the humanists. But Horace's *Ars poetica*, known throughout the Middle Ages, continued to be read essentially as before; what was new in its exegesis was precisely its comparison with the *Poetics*. And Plato's dicta on poetry, commonplace since the fifteenth century, provided for the sixteenth century primarily points of contrast with Aristotle on such issues as the nature of imitation, the divine inspiration of poets, and the moral utility of the literary genres. Longinus attracted little attention. Demetrius became a part of the current of rhetorical (rather than of poetic) discussion.[1] But Aristotle's *Poetics*, beginning in 1548, afforded the center of theoretical activity for several centuries to come.

Before 1498, when Giorgio Valla published his Latin translation, the text of the *Poetics* was practically unknown. The few traces during the Middle Ages,[2] the paraphrase of Averroës,[3] the mention in the letters and treatises of the early humanists, do not really constitute a "knowl-

[1] See my "Translations and Commentaries of Longinus, *On the Sublime*, to 1600: A Bibliography," *Modern Philology*, XLVII (1950), 145-151, and the companion article on Demetrius, *Philological Quarterly*, XXX (1951), 353-380.

[2] E.g., the partial translation of the *Poetics* into Latin in the Eton College manuscript.

[3] First published in 1481; see Cooper and Gudeman, *A Bibliography of the Poetics of Aristotle* (New Haven, 1928), item 108.

edge" of the text. Literary discussion and theorizing continued, through these centuries, independently of the *Poetics,* which was known only to a few scholars. This was still true, as a matter of fact, until around 1548, in spite of the publication in 1508 of the Greek text and in spite of an increasing number of passing allusions.[4] For example, in Trissino's *Poetica* (Books I to IV), published in 1529,[5] there is only a brief mention of the *Poetics*; but his fifth and sixth books, published posthumously in 1562,[6] lean so heavily upon Aristotle that at times they are merely a translation of the *Poetics.* Trissino died in 1550; between the two parts of his work had appeared Robortello's commentary of 1548, which really marks the beginning of the great influence of Aristotle's text in Europe.

I propose to trace briefly here what happened to Aristotle's theory, beginning in Italy in 1548 and ending in France with the neoclassical theory of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Such a narrative has a beginning and ending which are determined not so much by the dates involved as by the nature of the development—a constant change, in a single main direction, of the conception and interpretation of the document. If at the beginning we have the text of Aristotle relatively unencumbered by interpretations, at the end, with the French theorists, we have something only vaguely resembling that text—at the beginning, the theory of Aristotle, at the end that of his latter-day interpreters, the pseudo-Aristotelean theorists of the modern period. If we are to discover by what steps the change took place, we must first seek a statement of the two theories of poetry which constitute the extreme terms of the evolution.

Let us state the contrast briefly thus: Aristotle's *Poetics* is a work which concentrates its attention on the poem itself and asks primarily this question: By what means can a poem of a given kind be made as beautiful as possible, so that it will produce the proper artistic effect? Each part of the answer concerns some part of the poem and proposes a means for integrating that part completely into the total structure of the poem. Since the "proper artistic effect" is to be produced upon a reader or a spectator, Aristotle constantly gives consideration to the relationship between the poem and its audience; but the problem is always to know what characteristics of the poem will produce the desired effect upon an unspecified, general audience, rather than how the specific demands of a minutely characterized audience may be met. In the neoclassical French doctrine (if one may generalize in a single statement for a large number of theorists) the procedure is reversed. One begins with a tight and complete conception of the audience—for Boileau, the French "honnête homme" of Paris or the court in 1674. One asks how

[4] *Ibid.*, items 1, 405-18.
[5] *La Poetica di M. Giovan Giorgio Trissino* (Vicenza, 1529).
[6] *La Quinta e la Sesta Divisione della Poetica* (Venetia, 1562).

this audience feels, what are its tastes and prejudices; one decides the kind of reaction, whether of pleasure or utility, that one wishes to create in this audience. Then, working backwards from the audience to the poem, one inserts into the poem the appropriate parts for "pleasing" the audience or exerting upon it a moral influence. The poem may thus become a collection of disparate parts, since there is no guarantee that the needs or the demands of the audience will have any harmonious interrelationship.

How did these theorists arrive at this doctrine, and how could they possibly conceive of it as being Aristotelean? For the first step, we must go back of the date 1498 to the early Renaissance tradition of textual interpretation, perhaps I should say "habit" of textual interpretation. For it was habitual among the commentators and the scholiasts of this early period to center their erudition and their labor about the isolated pieces or lines or passages of a text. Suppose that the text is Horace. The scholar of the fifteenth century will take the text line for line and embroider around it all that his learning can supply in the way of linguistic illumination, of parallel passages, of examples from ancient or modern literatures. He will tell us, apropos of the phrase "ut pictura poesis," how the two arts are alike, who else compared them, the grammatical implications of the construction, how previous critics had interpreted it.[7] This procedure—which we may call one of fragmentation—will be followed for the whole of the text. Nowhere will there be any effort to state the meaning of the text as a whole. The question is not even raised. Is this an art of poetry in which the activity of the poet is foremost, or in which moral considerations dictate poetic forms, or in which the relationship of poetry to the objects imitated is discussed? The commentator does not show any awareness of the existence of these questions. There is no synthesis to correct the fragmentation, no philosophical reading of the text.

In the second place, and as a corollary to the first step, for those who use this method all statements in all texts are of an equal value. Since each one is in a sense torn from its context, it loses its status as a first principle, or as an intermediary statement, or as the final conclusion of a long process of deductive reasoning. The structure of a given document disappears; the form of the forest is lost and only isolated trees remain for contemplation. This is perhaps the most striking characteristic of the commentators of the period; they see no text as a whole, they have no notion of the vast differences among various methods of philosophical organization and exposition. It becomes possible, for example, to wrest a single statement from the *Republic* of Plato and discuss it in

[7] See, e.g., *Q. Horatij Flacci poemata: cum commentarijs eruditissimorum grammaticorum reconditissimis: Antonii Mancinelli, Jodoci Badij Ascensii & Ioannis Britannici . . .* (Milan, 1518), fols. cxxxvii-cxxxviii.

comparison with a single statement taken from Aristotle's *Politics*,[8] paying no attention to the fact that the two treatises have different points of departure, proceed by a different method of argumentation, produce different conclusions. Nor is it even necessary that the two works be of the same kind; a statement from a political tract may be perfectly coequal with one drawn from an art of poetry, and the fact that they belong to different arts or different disciplines is unimportant.

It was into such a tradition of fragmentation and of methodological insouciance that the *Poetics* of Aristotle was projected in 1498 and in 1508; and it was in the light of the same tradition that Robortello published the first great commentary on the text in 1548.[9] Robortello does indeed make an effort to see the text of the *Poetics* as a whole; he points out how one argument follows another, what the general sequence of the ideas is, where the transitions occur. But the sequence is not the same as structure, and he is no better than his predecessors in the handling of the ideas. Thus he finds numerous points of contact between Horace and Aristotle, and interprets passages from the *Poetics* as if they came from the *Ars poetica*. And, especially, he relates the text to the large number of rhetorical treatises which had long been the subject of study and elucidation. Both in Horace and in these rhetorics Robortello was in the presence of documents oriented, so to speak, towards the audience—Horace with his concern for the preferences of the Roman gentleman and his desire to please and instruct men of his own time at certain social levels, the rhetorics with their proper end of persuading a specific audience to a specific kind of action. It is not surprising then that this first commentary on the *Poetics* should also be a first step in the direction of a pseudo-Aristotelean theory in which the audience supplies all the criteria and determines the content and form of the poem.

I should hasten to say that Robortello is discreet in his proposals; but there is no doubt about the general tendency. He sees poetry as having two ends, the pleasure and the instruction of the audience (cf. Horace), and he sees this instruction as consisting in the moral betterment of the audience through examples, through striking demonstrations, through the exhortations of innumerable *sententiae*. Pleasure is sometimes an independent end, sometimes a servant of utility. But everywhere separate parts of the poem produce separate effects and serve separate ends; Aristotle's conception of the poem as a totality producing a total artistic impression has already been lost. As a consequence—or as a corollary—the principles of internal organization of the poem, Aristotle's necessity and probability, are transmuted into principles for relating the poem to

[8] Compare, in 1582, the Victorius commentary in *Aristotelis Politicorum Libri Octo* (Basel, 1582), *passim*.

[9] See my "Robortello on the *Poetics*, 1548," in *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern*, ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago, 1952), pp. 319-348.

nature and to the beliefs of the audience. In this way the requirement of "credibility" becomes a dominating consideration for Robortello. The question is no longer: "How is such or such a part integrated into the artistic structure of the poem?" but rather "Will the audience believe that such or such an action or character is true?" This shift is entirely consistent with the general movement away from the poem and towards the demands or the expectations of the audience.

This general movement reaches a kind of culmination, for sixteenth-century Italy, in the commentary of Castelvetro on the *Poetics* (1570).[10] In Castelvetro, the audience is not only the chief consideration, but the character of the audience itself is carefully restricted and described. Robortello had been satisfied with a fairly vague indication of the nature of his audience, saying that it was composed of educated and uneducated elements, that the latter were in need of moral instruction, that this instruction could best be achieved through a pleasure composed of admiration and the marvelous. Castelvetro changes the point of view considerably. For him the audience is the low populace exclusively—the "rozza moltitudine"—which has no knowledge, no memory, no imagination, no need or capacity for moral improvement. As a consequence, the only end with respect to this audience is pleasure, the kind of pleasure which comes from the illusion that what one sees is true, although it is extraordinary and marvelous. A poem becomes a kind of history, decorated by unusual episodes, made to order to please the ignorant crowd. Since the crowd has no imagination, it cannot believe that the action takes place elsewhere than on the stage immediately visible (which cannot represent more than one locality) nor that it occupies a time greater than that of the actual representation, which is itself limited by the physical capacities of the audience. Hence the so-called unities of place and of time. Moreover, since space and time are thus limited, the action represented will have to be equally restricted. In this way Castelvetro derives the unity of action—the only one recognized by Aristotle—as an auxiliary of the other two, and as a final consequence of the audience's short imagination. Aesthetic preoccupations have disappeared, and their place has been taken by rhetorical and physical concerns of the lowest order.

Robortello and Castelvetro may serve as epitomes of the development in Italy. Many other documents could be called upon to supply the detail of changes and variants.

When we move on to seventeenth-century France, we find that the same tendencies continue, but that there are several new developments. The point of departure is Castelvetro, but he is made to serve a society and a literary tradition of a distinctly different order. We may use as ex-

[10] See my "Castelvetro's Theory of Poetics," *ibid.*, pp. 349-371.

amples here, for the period around 1637, the remarks of Scudéry and Chapelain on Corneille's *Cid*.[11] In these two texts, what are the main points of discussion? First, moral considerations: Is it proper for Chimène to consent to a marriage with her father's murderer? Second, questions of truth and probability: Would a Spanish nobleman like Don Diègue have so many men at his command? Would the port of Seville be left unguarded in times of war? Third, matters of decorum: Is it acceptable for a king to play a joke? Fourth, the handling of the unities: Can all these events really have taken place within twenty-four hours? I abbreviate and simplify. It is significant that, although there are some artistic problems raised—such as the usefulness of the role of the Infanta—most of the discussion centers about the audience. But the audience has changed. It has no more imagination than its Italian counterpart; but it has, on the one hand, a fixed and severe moral code from which it admits no departure and, on the other hand, a fund of knowledge and general notions which must not be violated by the poet. It is already a superior audience to that of Castelvetro.

In Corneille's *Discours sur la poésie dramatique* of 1660[12] we find once again continuation of Castelvetro along with notable reversals—continuation in the sense that the audience still supplies most of the criteria and most of the "rules," reversal insofar as the end has changed. Corneille specifically seeks utility in dramatic poetry; or, rather, he seeks various kinds of utility in the different parts of a single poem. So far has he removed his point of view from that of Aristotle that for each of Aristotle's qualitative parts—plot, character, thought, and diction—he finds a separate utility, independent of the others and achieving a separate moral effect upon the audience. The poem becomes an instrument of moral edification in which pleasurable elements are ancillary to the utilitarian ends. The audience remains that of Corneille's own commentators, one which has little in common with the crude masses of Castelvetro.

Boileau, in 1674,[13] in a way returns to the position of the early sixteenth-century critics, since he proposes the Horatian *utile dulci* as the end of poetry. But he goes beyond his immediate predecessors in the restriction of the audience to a very select group of the "upper classes." He has only contempt for the idlers of the Pont-Neuf and for the literary forms susceptible of pleasing them. He disdains the Italians and the Spaniards and the French provincials—all peoples and all classes who do not belong to "the court and the town" of his own day. Boileau's audience not only has fixed moral values, as did that of Corneille, but it also

[11] Corneille, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. C. Marty-Laveaux, Vol. XII (Paris, 1862).
[12] *Ibid.*, Vol. I (1862).
[13] In the *Art poétique;* see *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Ch. Gidel, Vol. II (Paris, 1872).

possesses a vast store of knowledge and of expectations which must be respected; it knows thoroughly the rules of the poetic art, has absolute ideas about decorum and behavior, is possessed of solid historical notions. It has, in addition, a refined taste which would reject excess of any kind. Obviously, a poet writing for such an audience as this will have other preoccupations than those of Castelvetro's poet. He will need to write up to a refined audience rather than down to a vulgar one, and will have to provide utility as well as pleasure. But both poets will take as their point of departure the conception of the particularized audience and will strive to achieve ends specifically related to this audience. Thus both are descendants of Robortello's poet, and follow a method diametrically opposed to that of Aristotle.

The final step in this evolution consists in the replacing of the refined and restricted audience of Boileau by the "man of taste" of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In such theories as those of Batteux[14] even the rules disappear, and the poet has recourse only to his own taste for the discovery of means to please his singular audience. All utilitarian aims once again disappear, and the only remaining end is that of a highly sophisticated pleasure on the part of a highly cultivated individual. In a sense, this step is not only the end of the Aristotelean tradition but also the beginning of the Longinian mode. The pseudo-Aristoteleans, for whom utility or pleasure (or both) was achieved by the observance of set rules, give way to the Longinians, for whom the creation of the poet and the contemplation of the reader are matters of a private sensitivity which, for both, has a common meeting place in the masterpieces of the past.

It should not be forgotten that, throughout the long evolution that I have sketched so summarily, the theorists thought of themselves as Aristoteleans and of their theories as going back to the authority of Aristotle. Rarely did they openly dissent (cf. Scaliger[15] and at times Castelvetro), never did they realize that their ideas would be completely unacceptable to a sound Aristotelean. Their failure to realize this may be ascribed to several errors on their part. First, they came to the text of Aristotle with habits of textual interpretation, habits of fragmentation and methodological anarchy, which made it impossible for them to understand this closely constructed and tightly argued document. Second, they read the *Poetics* in the light of a rhetorical tradition which reduced all aspects of literary documents to considerations stemming from the audience. Third, they could not dissociate from their thinking about poetic matters the numerous details of Horace's *Ars poetica*, which they had long known, and they insisted on reading Aristotle as if he were a

[14] Abbé Batteux, *Les Beaux Arts réduits à un même principe* (Paris, 1746).

[15] J.-C. Scaliger, *Poetices* (Lyon, 1561); cf. my "Scaliger versus Aristotle on Poetics," *Modern Philology*, XXXIX (1942), 337-360.

kind of Ur-Horace. And finally, they tried to "modernize" Aristotle, to adapt him to their own times and their own peoples, in a manner scarcely authorized by the Aristotelean text. The result was one of the strangest misunderstandings of a basic text in the history of ideas, and the formation of that very curious complex of notions which we call the neoclassical doctrine. Need I add that the ultimate result has been some equally astonishing thinking about poetic matters on our own part? We need not look very deeply within our own habits of literary discussion to discover the last influences of these sixteenth-century Italian and seventeenth-century French pseudo-Aristoteleans.[16].

Northwestern University

[16] This paper was prepared for delivery at the meeting of the Comparative Literature Section of the Modern Language Association in New York, Dec. 29, 1950. The thesis here rapidly developed will be fully presented in my *Poetic Theory in the Cinquecento*, now in preparation.

ALCESTIS AND THE COCKTAIL PARTY

ROBERT B. HEILMAN

IN REVEALING, in 1951, the affinity between his *Cocktail Party* and Euripides' *Alcestis*, T. S. Eliot permitted himself a hint of triumph that this relationship had not yet (two years after the first performance of the play) been detected. Mr. Eliot had had the very human satisfaction of keeping his secret, and in keeping it he had incidentally insured that the immediate criticism of *The Cocktail Party* would not be, like that of *The Family Reunion*, confused by observations upon its genealogy.

After the pleasure of keeping silent, there was the pleasure of breaking silence and of proclaiming the unsuspected truth. But this pleasure, with its legitimate histrionic ingredient, must have been compounded by the fact that the hidden history now brought to light was really not quite credible. Mr. Eliot admitted that it took "detailed explanation" to convince his acquaintance of the "genuineness of the inspiration."[1] For the public, his unelaborated assertion of the kinship remains almost shocking; surely one of the minor Greek dramas, very much less than a tragedy though considerably more than a satyr play, seems the unlikeliest source for a "sophisticated" contemporary play, with its dominant comedy of manners, its intimation of tragedy, its reminiscences of parable, and its ambiguity. The bafflingness which hangs over *The Cocktail Party* is the least conspicuous trait of *Alcestis*. Nor did Eliot cushion his shock by outlining parallels that would compel recognition and assent. Rather his public statement had the effect of retaining, at the moment of revelation, something of the mystery, for he noted only a single resemblance—that of the eccentric guest who drinks and sings. But in *The Cocktail Party* the Unidentified Guest's partiality to gin and song is so incidental that one is scarcely aware of it except at the level of theatrical gag; that it may have been suggested by Heracles' conduct at Admetus's palace is of no help whatsoever in assessing the serious role of Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly. Perhaps Mr. Eliot believed that further elaboration would be uninteresting; or perhaps his tip was partly playful, embodying the incomplete confession of a devoted entertainer carrying a little further the theatrical game to which he had committed himself. Or there's another possibility; Mr. Eliot's apparent joke may be a pedagogical joke, and his meager clue to what he has done an invitation to seek out the heart of his performance.

[1] T. S. Eliot, *Poetry and Drama* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), pp. 38-39.

About the intention of his announcement we need not speculate; but the fact is that to look at *The Cocktail Party* steadily in the light of *Alcestis* is to see some of its lineaments a little more clearly (and, conversely, the Eliot play provides a perspective from which one can discern potentialities, perhaps unsuspected, in the Euripides play). Again, one need not inquire into the formal intention of the playwright, which at best is likely to be more complex or fluid than some students of literature may be predisposed to admit or than the author himself may be aware—and which, as the work itself assumes autonomy, may undergo progressive and radical modifications until, in the end, the "intention" realized in the completed work may be quite different from the "intention" which presided over the first strokes of composition. We might say, for instance, that Eliot intended to "imitate" *Alcestis* or to write a "creative revision" (cf. Dryden's "regulative revision" of *Antony and Cleopatra*) or a "dramatic analogue" of it, but all of these formulations would be loose. I would rather say, going on the evidence of the plays, that *The Cocktail Party* seizes upon thematic material latent in *Alcestis* and dramatically explores it further, reinterprets it, and enlarges it. As Raymond Radiguet has said, "A creative writer runs no risk in 'copying' a work, since this is impossible to him. The creative mind will instinctively discard the model, and use it only as a fulcrum."[2]

Eliot may even have got a hint from the tone of *Alcestis* and then, as with theme and character, gone markedly beyond his original. *Alcestis* is, in our terms, romantic comedy; but its distinction lies in its almost daring flirtation with tragedy. From one point of view, Admetus is like a Molière butt; from another, he is almost the tragic hero—the "good man" with a flaw that leads to disaster, and with some capacity for self-recognition. Admetus comes very close to the soul searching of an Oedipus or an Othello: "O my friends, what then avails it that I live, if I must live in misery and shame?"[3] But his facing of the situation he has brought about, his facing of himself, his facing of guilt—all this is cut short by a miraculous intervention which, in restoring Alcestis to him, accomplishes that adjustment of circumstance which is at the heart of the comic mode. Eliot calls his play "a comedy," and in its wit, in its agile use of incongruity, and in its espousal of accommodation as a value its comic quality is plain. But Edward and Lavinia Chamberlayne are both treated like Admetus in being compelled to undergo moral introspection; indeed, theirs is very much more severe and penetrating than his, and to that extent *The Cocktail Party* goes further toward the tone

[2] Quoted by Jean Cocteau in his Preface to Madame de La Fayette, *The Princess of Cleves*, trans. by H. Ashton (London, 1943), p. ix.

[3] The Richard Aldington translation, in *Seven Famous Greek Plays*, ed. Whitney J. Oates and Eugene O'Neill, Jr., Modern Library College Edition (New York, 1950), p. 278.

of tragedy. Besides, there is Celia, who alone of the dramatis personae is capable of living tragically. But her derivation from *Alcestis,* if indeed she does derive from it, is a problem of character to which we return later.

The way in which Eliot has imaginatively worked out from *Alcestis* in his own direction will be most clear if we first notice the parallels in plot, the anatomical resemblances, between the two plays. These are astonishingly frequent. The action of *Alcestis* takes place on the day on which Alcestis dies for Admetus, the action of *The Cocktail Party* begins on the day Lavinia leaves Edward. Admetus is grief-stricken, Edward is chagrined and even seriously disturbed. However, Admetus is most hospitable to Heracles, and Edward carries on with the cocktail party, trying to be a good host to his guests. Admetus minimizes the seriousness of the situation by concealing the fact that it is his wife who has died; likewise Edward tries to pass off Lavinia's desertion as something less serious, a visit to a sick aunt. By giving Edward not one but many guests to contend with, Eliot has enlarged the social situation created for Admetus by the arrival of Heracles.

But if Heracles in one sense becomes many guests, the parallel between him and the Unidentified Guest is not given up but is rather carefully elaborated. Heracles' arrival is unscheduled, the Guest appears to have "crashed" the cocktail party. Immediately on Heracles' arrival, his courage and resourcefulness are established for us by his telling the Chorus about his adventures; as soon as the Guest talks to Edward alone, he exhibits confidence and authority. Heracles' questioning of Admetus is exactly paralleled by the Guest's blunt interrogation of Edward. As Eliot has told us, Heracles gets drunk and uproarious, and the Guest drinks and sings. The Servant reproves Heracles for his conduct; Julia mockingly reproaches Edward,

> You've been *drinking* together!
> So this is the kind of friend you have
> When Lavinia is out of the way! Who is he?[4]

Heracles promises to "bring back"[5] Alcestis to Admetus; the Guest, referring to Lavinia, uses the phrase, "If I bring her back," and then assures Edward, "In twenty-four hours / She will come to you here."[6] Heracles make a game of urging Admetus to give up his grief and find consolation in a new marriage, and similarly the Guest enjoys pointing out to Edward the advantages of independence from his wife; both husbands, of course, want their wives back, and in each story the wife is brought back by the tormentor. Heracles' sudden unveiling of Alcestis

[4] T. S. Eliot, *The Cocktail Party* (New York, 1950), p. 34. All references are to this edition.

[5] *Seven Plays,* p. 273.

[6] Page 33; cf. pp. 32, 109.

is paralleled by Sir Henry's surprise confrontation of Edward and Lavinia in his office; although Lavinia has come back to Edward physically, Sir Henry now takes on the major task of restoring them to each other morally. And, to complete this catalogue of surface likenesses, Death has come literally to Admetus's palace to snatch Alcestis, a fact surely alluded to, humorously, in Julia's exclamation to the newly returned Lavina, "Don't tell me you were abducted!"[7]

Eliot's variations are plain enough to dispose of any idle supposition that he is simply rephrasing, as it were, an original, just as the evident substance of his own work makes impossible a suspicion of mere virtuoso ingenuity. The ingenuity—even the virtuosity—is there, of course; but having in a sense paid tribute to it by noting the systematic affiliations of play to play, we need to go ahead and see what end it serves. Eliot's underlying performance is the perception and the amplification of certain meanings which inhere in Euripides' plot and characters—in the myth which he took over and in the skillful entertainment which he made of it. When Heracles, reproved by the Servant, makes a lively, imaged promise that he will leap upon Death, wrestle with him, wound him, and compel him to yield up Alcestis, he gives us the background for the Guest's sober statement to Edward: "... it is a serious matter / To bring someone back from the dead." From the original action Eliot has distilled an "idea" which he proceeds to work up. Edward replies:

> From the dead?
> That figure of speech is somewhat . . . dramatic,
> As it was only yesterday that my wife left me.[8]

By "dramatic" Edward doubtless means theatrical, improbable—a judgment that might almost seem to have point if we did not see that the metaphor is drawn from the literal story in Euripides. Now, since Eliot has said that he wished the origin of his plot to remain unknown, the reinterpretation of a wife's dying for her husband as a desertion of her husband may seem a dextrous trick of concealment. But it is clearly more than a tour de force; rather, Eliot is taking the literal story and uncovering its symbolic possibilities, or, in other terms, both naturalizing and universalizing the folk mystery. The result—the definition of desertion as death, and, by extension, of the rupture of the marriage as itself a death (rather than, say, a convenience or a casual legality or quest for integrity)—is to compel a reconsideration of the nature of the relationship of Edward and Lavinia, that is of husbands and wives generally, and a profounder sense of what it entails. Husbands and wives are "alive" to each other when their relationship, even a halting one, goes on; in this sense marriage itself is "life." But Eliot is not content to halt at this rec-

[7] Page 84.
[8] Page 71.

ognition; he characteristically pushes on to the paradox that must be assimiliated. The Guest replies to Edward:

> Ah, but we die to each other daily.
> What we know of other people
> Is only our memory of the moments
> During which we knew them.[9]

In the more obvious sense death is departure, separation, rupture; but in a profounder sense, death is ever present, inevitable, the unbridgeable separateness of men and women even in their most intimate relationship. Marriage is life, but this life must be understood to include death. The doctrine does not propose despair, however, but looks toward conquering the death of separation by a reunion grounded in the acknowledgement of imperfect actuality. Through "death" they gain not eternal, but temporal, life, which must include something of death. This "moralizing" of the literal death in Euripides is one source of the relative spaciousness of Eliot's drama. Another source is Eliot's working out of the potentialities of Euripides' characters.

The treatment of Edward and Lavinia in Acts II and III of *The Cocktail Party* leaves us with so strong a sense, first, of the need of both of them to understand themselves and to work toward making "the best of a bad job," as Edward calls it, and then, of their reciprocal efforts to achieve what Reilly calls "a good life," that we are likely to forget the situation in Act I, when the picture we are given is not of a blowup caused by equal failure on both sides, but of Lavinia's precipitating the break through motives which she at least regards as generous and helpful. She tells Edward:

> I thought that if I died
> To you, I who had been only a ghost to you,
> You might be able to find the road back
> To a time when you were real—[10]

Again the double value of death: death as a breaking of their life, and death as a concomitant of their life—though here, in Lavinia's view, it has gone beyond the "normal" alienation of individuals implied in the earlier speeches of Reilly (the Guest). In the fine paradox of the "ghost" who can "die" Eliot has amplified the Euripides story, just as he has subtly varied it by the minute change of *die for* to *die to*. In grant-

[9] Pp. 71-72. Several lesser details in this scene involve, despite the ironic seriousness of tone, a kind of joking reminder of *Alcestis*. When Edward asks, "So you want me to greet my wife as a stranger?" (p. 72), and the Guest prescribes, "When you see your wife, you must ask no questions" (p. 73), we can hardly fail to see a recasting of Euripides' final scene, in which the veiled Alcestis is a "stranger" to Admetus and in which Admetus is told Alcestis must preserve a three-day silence. The ritual requirement is translated into a psychiatric stratagem.

[10] Pp. 97-98.

ing to Lavinia an element of unselfishness (and in this instance she is hardly to be read as a victim of self-deception), Eliot retains the center of Alcestis's character, but at the same time he alters the proportions. In Alcestis the over-all emphasis is on the spirit of sacrifice, with the self-regarding emotions coming in secondly and secondarily—some self-righteousness, some resentment against Admetus's parents, and a bargaining sense and fondness for power which lead her to proscribe remarriage for Admetus. In Lavinia we have only a glimpse of generosity, and see her mainly (before the new self-discipline and insight of Act III) as an agile combatant in marriage, opposing her husband with a selfishness that complements his own, and with a managerial tendency derived from Alcestis but greatly expanded.

This change of proportions, however, is less important than another difference; Eliot has really seen two characters in Alcestis—the ordinary woman and the saint—and has boldly split Alcestis into Lavinia and Celia (whose name, we may suppose, is not an accident). On the face of it such a split looks like a reduction of one complex person (the woman not completely submerged in the nun, as Lowes said of Chaucer's Prioress) into two simpler ones—the housewife and the *religieuse*. But Eliot is very careful to leave neither wife nor saint at a level of allegorical simplicity. He endows Lavinia with some trace of the self-abnegatory and with a capacity for understanding herself and others and for feeling a general moral responsibility in the world—just as he compels Celia to earn her sainthood by the trial and error of an affair with Edward, by the "desperation" of a sense of aloneness and sin, and by the rigors of her "journey." The fact that he makes the split shows the influence of his belief upon the form of the materials in which his play originates; world and spirit are different realities, and must be represented in different dramatic actions (since Lavinia—and with her, Edward—is granted a kind of "salvation" within their ordinary, secular world, we can see Eliot's development from *The Family Reunion*, in which, so to speak, salvation was possible only to spirit and the world was simply condemned for not being spirit). As the possessor of a rare capacity for spiritual achievement, Celia appears in a dramatic movement which in effect reverses that of Alcestis. Alcestis has performed her great act of spirit before the play opens, and a considerable part of her own actions on the stage show her dwindling into a wife, whereas Celia grows, having to discover the inadequacy for her of the mere wifely, so to speak (she sees that she had created Edward, her lover and possible husband, out of her own aspiration), before she can make her great choice of the "second way." Yet at that it is remarkable how much of the Alcestis story remains in the treatment of Celia—for instance, the suffering and horror of the final experience, as both dramatists instinctively guard against the cloying effect of the Griselda motif. Alcestis cries out, "What

a path must I travel, / O most hapless of women!"[11] and Reilly acknowledges to Celia "It is a terrifying journey" and says after her death,

> I'd say she suffered all that we should suffer
> In fear and pain and loathing—all those together—
> And reluctance of the body to become a *thing*.
> I'd say she suffered more, because more conscious
> Than the rest of us. She paid the highest price
> In suffering. That is part of the design.[12]

Euripides' story is virtually made for Christian readaptation—a human being dying that another may live and then rising from the dead. Eliot omits the resurrection, except symbolically, perhaps, in the impact of the Celia story on others, but he does heighten the Christian analogy by having Celia die by crucifixion. At this point, unfortunately, the drama of Celia has trailed off into an undramatic post mortem.[13]

Eliot has drawn heavily upon Admetus, not only in such details of the action as we have mentioned, but in the general outlines of the moral experience. As soon as Alcestis actually leaves him, Admetus begins to realize her value to him; he tells Heracles that he does not want another wife. Likewise Edward realizes his need for Lavinia and rejects Celia, whom now he might have. In fact, when Eliot makes Edward say both "I cannot live with her" and "I cannot live without her," he is echoing Admetus's situation, with a very ironic twist in meaning. For both men the sense of loss and the following scenes of recrimination lead to a fairly thorough experience of self-recognition, and after the self-recognition each gets his wife back (for Edward, the recognition and the return have several phases). At the end each play leaves the impression of a successfully continuing marriage, though Eliot has made a major point of studying the impact upon their relationship of the exploration of self which each participant has undergone, whereas Euripides en-

[11] *Seven Plays*, p. 250.

[12] Pp. 142, 184.

[13] Eliot himself admits that his last act may be only an "epilogue" (*Poetry and Drama*, p. 40). This applies principally to the Celia story, which, being only reported (and the report itself being somewhat inept), comes through as an inadequate counterweight to the Edward-Lavinia comedy. Eliot has not solved, in either *The Family Reunion* or *The Cocktail Party*, the problem of finding a workable dramatic expression of the life of the saint. In this respect *Murder in the Cathedral*, more lyrical and less hampered by the conventions of realism, is more successful. The conception of the saint may require either a more discursive treatment (e.g., that of the novel, as exemplified in Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*) or a more concentrated one (e.g., that of the lyric). At the high point both of Eliot's later plays tend to shift from the dramatic to the lyric mode. Partly for this reason, *The Cocktail Party* gives the effect of tragedy manquée, if one may think of tragedy in its essence as the pursuit of spiritual destiny (Edward and Lavinia, it is true, "accept their destiny"—p. 149—but theirs is social and worldly). A student of mine, Dimitir Gotseff, has neatly termed the play "comedy with tragic relief."

tirely excludes consideration of the quality of the postreunion marriage.

While it would be easy to pass over the story of Admetus as simply another fantasy or popular tale of wonder, as many readers are probably inclined to do, Eliot has plainly seen that it has great symbolic possibilities and has modeled on Admetus a character who embodies a great deal of the ordinary man moving toward middle age and even of ordinary humanity generally. One can imagine Eliot consciously refusing to regard Admetus as simply a stock figure in a romantic drama, replaceable by any other stock figure who could be called a husband, but instead taking him seriously as a character and asking, "What kind of man would ask others to die for him? What is the meaning of the situation that he has worked himself into?" Perhaps he read Admetus as a precursor of the Struldbrugs, as an early instance in the tradition of human beings who want to live forever; for the play makes some inquiry into the human discontent with the limitations of the human condition. The man who has fallen out with his fate is "a middle-aged man / Beginning to know what it is to feel old" and unassured and disenchanted. He is not without intelligence and imagination, but he is limited in both (Edward speaks of his "dull . . . spirit of mediocrity"). Again, he "has no sense of humour," as Lavinia says of Edward, who makes a good target for her wit and fails to join Celia and Lavinia in humorous recognition of their joint plight. He is given to feeling sorry for himself. When Edward says, "I have had enough of people being sorry for me," he opens himself up to Lavinia's riposte, "Yes, because they can never be so sorry for you / As you are for yourself. And that's hard to bear." He is a self-deceiver, as is Lavinia; Reilly says to them, "My patients such as you are the self-deceivers." Edward is vastly self-centered; the phase of self-discovery which goes on after Lavinia's return is a lamentation on the theme, "Hell is oneself," so painfully carried on that Lavinia's reply has justice, "Could you bear, for a moment, / To think about *me?*" To be self-centered is to be lacking in love; Lavinia says that Edward "has never been in love with anybody." He lives not understandingly but mechanically; Reilly says that he is "a set / Of obsolete responses." Edward wants to be "bolstered, encouraged / . . . To think well of yourself," as Lavinia sharply tells him.[14]

In all this, Eliot has shrewdly amplified Admetus or actualized what is latent in him. What is more—and what is not so immediately apparent—Edward's affair with Celia is certainly to be understood as a version of Admetus's wanting someone to die for him; in each case what is at stake is self-esteem, and the heart of the action is a testing for loyalties and flattering responses. We see this unmistakably in Edward,

[14] The passages quoted in this paragraph are, respectively, on pp. 65, 66, 90, 76, 100, 97, 119, 98, 123, 31, 92.

who comes to realize that Celia has been a psychological utility rather than an object of love; and Eliot's keen analysis of Edward enables us to perceive that Admetus's quest for a substitute die-er proceeds, not only from obvious love of life, but also from some self-doubt, some sense of inadequacy to role. Perhaps we might claim as a general truth that excessive love of life is a function of a feared, or sensed, or actual mediocrity in life. Admetus, then, cannot be disposed of simply as a ridiculous or incredible figure. Rather his poll of life-giving alternates, with its expressionistic immediacy that is initially shocking, exhibits a familiar human need—the need to have reassurance about one's own significance and power in the world. Wanting an additional life and wanting an additional love come to much the same thing. Both heroes are Everyman wrestling with the problem which at some time in his life he must face—the problem of knowing that he is not Superman. To Edward one might even apply the familiar modern term "Little Man." But Eliot neither sentimentalizes nor idealizes the Little Man; rather he bids him recognize himself, have no illusions about himself, and come to terms with himself. Further, he unmistakably generalizes the case of Edward, when he has him say, "But I am obsessed by the thought of my own insignificance," as a clear preparation for Reilly's reply:

> Half of the harm that is done in this world
> Is due to people who want to feel important.
> They don't mean to do harm—but the harm does not interest them
> Or they do not see it, or they justify it
> Because they are absorbed in the endless struggle
> To think well of themselves.[15]

A little later Eliot throws us right back into Euripides when he has Edward say, "I am not afraid of the death of the body, / But this death is terrifying. The death of the spirit—"[16] Here is the death theme again, but now with a variation that sums up the present point. Admetus was afraid of the death of the body, true, but in his fear we have seen a symbolic expression of a sense of spiritual inadequacy, the same sense that, at first unrecognized, determined much of Edward's action. The self-recognition to which Admetus progressed took, as we have seen, this form: ". . . what then avails it that I live, if I just live in misery and shame?" Like Admetus, Edward learns that the real issue is not quantity (of life or love), but quality of life (i.e., "death of the spirit"). But Euripides, who has already pushed the satyr drama as far as it will go, cannot go on to make Admetus act upon his recognition; whereas Edward must still learn that he cannot prescribe the conditions for the life of the spirit but must discover, and make do, whatever potentialities

[15] Page 111.
[16] Page 113.

of life lie right there where "death of the spirit" has seemed inevitable.

Edward's mentor, Dr. Reilly, who as "psychiatrist" may seem incontrovertibly modern, also has his roots in the Euripides play. In him, indeed, Eliot combines the functions of two characters in *Alcestis*—of Heracles, as he has indicated, and, almost as importantly, of Pheres. Pheres is the source whom we are likely to miss, because he is easiest to remember as a hurt and bad-tempered father. But Pheres' abuse of Admetus is not only a response to Admetus's attack upon him; it is also in part a painfully accurate analysis of Admetus and in effect a summons to him to see himself as he is: "You were born to live your own life, whether miserable or fortunate; . . . But you . . . you shirked your fate by killing her! . . . You, the worst of cowards, surpassed by a woman who died for you . . ."[17] The shock of this denunciation, as well as his own grief, leads Admetus to face the issue, instead of disguising it by blaming others and blaming Fate, and to achieve a measure of self-understanding. As a professional man and as one who is not on the defensive, Reilly is different from Pheres; but he has the same role of telling unpleasant truths the shock of which drives Edward (and later Lavinia) to a new self-recognition. "Resign yourself to be the fool you are." "You might have ruined three lives / . . . Now there are only two—" ". . . you have been making up your case / So to speak, as you went along." "You were lying to me . . ."[18]

Since Reilly's chief business is helping human beings to see the truth and find their destiny, it may seem that he is largely explicable as an ingenious version of the angry truth teller, Pheres, and that his resemblance to Heracles—the only resemblance to which Eliot has publicly called attention—stops at certain incidents of conduct, such as conviviality in the midst of distress. To this we might add that Heracles and Reilly both enter the situation at the right time, both show great power, and both effect rescues—the one from Death, the other from death of the spirit. But there is a little more to it than that. Surely to Euripides' audience Heracles must have been an ambivalent figure—to some a boisterous strong man, to others a devoted servant of duty, bringing more than brute force into play. Likewise Reilly can be read as simply an ingenious psychiatrist, but the more alert will have to see in him something more. (Incidentally, it is an easy phonetic leap from *Heracles* or *Hercules* to *Harcourt-Reilly*.)

Eliot would of course sense the doubleness of Heracles, and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that he found in him the suggestion for the thematic basis of his own play—the dualism of world and spirit, and the interpenetration of world by spirit. For Heracles, as the son of

[17] *Seven Plays*, p. 267.
[18] Pp. 31, 109, 115, 120.

Alcmena and Zeus, is half human, half divine; and in Reilly there is an ambiguity which makes a limited naturalistic view of him seem continually inadequate. Not that Reilly is wholly "transhumanized," to use the word applied by Julia to the experience undergone by Celia in her "journey"; just as Heracles, in the words of a recent handbook, "erred occasionally, being half-mortal,"[19] so Reilly "must always take risks," and, as he himself says, ". . . sometimes I have made the wrong decision." Nor is he omniscient; Julia reminds him, "You must accept your limitations."[20] But he has remarkable insight and exercises a special power affecting human destiny. And, although his actions may virtually all be accounted for in naturalistic terms, Eliot has been most successful in creating an air, if not of the inexplicable, at least of the unexplained, of the quizzically irregular, of the modestly elusive, of the herculean at once urbane and devoted; from the time when Reilly tells Edward that he (i.e., Edward) has started "a train of events / Beyond your control," and Lavinia confesses (in terms that Alcestis might have used), "Yet something, or somebody, compelled me to come,"[21] until the end of the play, we are given continual impressions of mysterious forces in action. With his benedictions, Reilly could be the priest; with his emphasis on free will, on the choice which is uncompelled but which has its consequences, the theologian; yet in his concern with salvation there is another suggestion that is made most sharply when he says, after dismissing Celia, "It is finished." Since the words on the Cross impose a little more weight than the immediate dramatic situation, which is not primarily an ordeal for Reilly, can bear, we are not wholly comfortable with them here. Yet, as a part of the over-all strategy of suggestion, they enlarge the possibilities before us. For the man who died on the Cross was the "Son of God" but born of a mortal mother—just like Heracles; and the death on the Cross was a mode of bringing life to others, just as Heracles brought back Alcestis from Death, and as Reilly rescues his patients from something which both they and we see as a kind of death. To this extent at least we have another hint of the myth of Christ to which we have already seen parallels in the stories of Alcestis and Celia.

Reilly, it thus becomes clear, is considerably more than the psychiatrist whom in so many details he resembles. He is less the psychological repair man than the soul healer. Psychiatry takes on a spiritual dimension. Out of a couple of interlocking triangles in which the participants are at best half alive come four new lives grounded in the recognition and choice of destiny—that of the artist, that of the ordinary, imperfect,

[19] Dan S. Norton and Peters Rushton, *Classical Myths in English Literature* (New York, 1952), p. 191.

[20] Pp. 146, 185, 148.

[21] Pp. 28 and 94. Cf. similar speeches by Reilly (p. 71) and Lavinia (pp. 86-87).

but tolerable and even saving marriage, and that of the saint. These transformations appear as more than standardized "adjustment," as, indeed, the product of great labors by a bringer of life who has both an extraordinary personality and special resources, not wholly identified, to draw upon. The situation which Eliot dramatizes is described with notable accuracy in the final chorus of Euripides, which, in the Aldington translation, even "sounds like" Eliot:

> Spirits have many shapes,
> Many strange things are performed by the Gods.
> The expected does not always happen.
> And God makes a way for the unexpected.
> So ends this action.[22]

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[22] Page 286.

CHINESE LITERATURE IN THE CONTEXT OF WORLD LITERATURE

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EVERY student of China, whether historian, sociologist, or philologist, is aware of the existence of a considerable body of Chinese literature, but his interest in that literature is likely to be a by-product of his special interest. The student of general literature, on the other hand, is attracted to Chinese literature, if at all, not because it is Chinese but because it is rumored to be an important literature. He is likely to have a very uncertain idea of both the extent and the quality of Chinese literature and may quite legitimately ask: What is the position of Chinese literature in world literature? What can the study of Chinese literature contribute to our understanding of literature? In this article I should like to suggest some answers to these questions.

The first question has two aspects. If we should draw up a systematic chart in which all the literatures of the world will appear, where would we place Chinese literature on such a chart? Such a procedure would involve other considerations than that of relative value, notably chronology, duration, and filiation. But a complete answer to our question will also have to include a value judgment. What is Chinese literature worth in comparison with other literatures of the world? These two aspects of the question deserve separate treatment. Since the establishment of a relationship involves no more than an arrangement of facts, while value judgments are often assumed to be subjective and controversial, I shall first try to assign a place to Chinese literature in terms of temporal sequences and filiation. To be sure that my comparisons are valid, I should begin by defining the Chinese literature I am talking about. I shall pass by this really difficult part of the question as irrelevant to our present purpose, take for granted that we know what "literature" is, and say that I am including in Chinese literature all literary works and other works with literary interest written in the Chinese script, whether the language be classical Chinese or a colloquial dialect or a mixture of the two.

The most striking attribute of Chinese literature so defined is its enormous time range. No other modern literature has had a comparable duration. We usually begin our study of English literature with *Beowulf*, French with the *Chanson de Roland*, Spanish with the *Cid*,

Italian with Dante; the Chinese *Classic of Songs* is at least 1,500 years older than the oldest of these. But when we inquire about the grounds on which the modern European literatures are made to begin at these specific dates, we find inconsistencies. The dividing lines are not made on purely linguistic grounds: Anglo-Saxon is not English any more than Latin is French; if *Beowulf* belongs to English literature, is not Catullus just as much a part of French literature? Obviously a geographical factor has been influential here; *Beowulf* was at least written down in England. But Italian is closer to Latin than French is, so there is a double reason for including Latin literature with Italian. In the same way Greek literature has a geographical and linguistic continuity comparable in time range with Chinese literature.

When we consider the diversity of modern Chinese dialects, some of which have been used as literary media (I am excluding the unwritten ballad literature which exists in all the dialects), the whole body of Chinese literature is more closely analogous to the group of Romance literatures, including their parent Latin stock, than to any single modern European national literature. There are, however, obvious points of difference. Classical Chinese literature has a much longer history than classical Latin, and the classical language continued to be an important medium for literature in China long after the appearance of writings in colloquial language. Whereas in Europe the vernacular languages rapidly replaced Latin as the dominant literary vehicle, in China the two kinds of writing existed side by side for at least a thousand years. In China, because of the essentially nonphonetic nature of the written script, dialect differences are not so apparent in writing as in speech, so that works in several dialects remain more or less intelligible to all readers. As a result, there is a greater homogeneity between, say, Wu dialect songs and novels and those in the speech of the capital than between comparable French and Italian forms. Another point of contrast is in the relative prestige enjoyed by the vernacular literatures. After the Renaissance, European national literatures were generally accepted as being of the same sort as the literatures of classical antiquity; however bitter the controversy between the Ancients and the Moderns, at least their respective merits could be disputed. The situation in China was very different. Vernacular writings were not even admitted into the category of literature, and so were less subject to the established canons of taste which applied exclusively to works written in the classical tradition. The result was the development of two separate traditions, exemplified in two co-existing streams of writing and determined by the language employed.

On the other hand, there is one striking similarity between Chinese literature and the Latin-Romance literatures. The vernacular literatures in both China and Europe developed new forms which were un-

known or at best rudimentary in the classical literatures of the two areas—the metrical romance and the novel. Other important forms had analogies in the classical literatures but evolved independently—the song and, in Europe, the theater. The Chinese drama appeared late and seems to be a new development peculiar to the vernacular tradition.

Before taking up the problem of value judgments, I should like to state a little more explicitly what I have said about the relative place of Chinese literature in world literature. The important literatures of the world tend to fall into groups similar to but not always identical with linguistic families; they also tend to be associated with specific geographical areas. If we postulate such entities as Arabic literature, Indian literature, and Chinese literature, we are equally justified in speaking of a European literature. Each of these groups will include writings in more than one language, sometimes unrelated languages, as Arabic and Persian, Chinese and Japanese, but for each there will be a dominant literary tradition and considerable reciprocal influence within the group. Borrowings from literatures outside a given group will occur less often and will be felt as exotic and bizarre. These four major groups of literatures are not all of equal magnitude or complexity. European literature especially is divided into a number of subgroups, determined primarily by linguistic similarities: Scandanavian, Germanic, Slavic, Romance, etc. Chinese literature is not so varied as European literature as a whole, but is in general comparable with the Latin-Romance literatures in terms of duration and linguistic change. I have not attempted to draw up a similar comparison between Chinese literature and Arabic or Indian literatures because I am not sufficiently familiar with their histories.

When we turn from these purely formal analogies to a consideration of relative values, we are not constrained to limit ourselves to a comparison of Chinese literature with the specific group of European literatures which presents the closest analogy from a relational point of view. We may feel that the Russian novel is of more importance than all the novels in the Romance languages, and be curious to know how the Chinese novel compares with the highest development of the form in Europe. What the student of literature wants to know is whether he will find in Chinese literature anything to repay him for the effort of learning the language, and he wants to be told in terms of what is familiar to him.

There are a few general principles affecting comparisons of this sort. An estimate of the value of Chinese literature can be made properly only in terms of specific comparable genres. The comparison should be quantative as well as qualitative, and relative chronology should not be allowed to affect the issue. The existence in a literature of a single great novel—say *Don Quixote*—does not mean that the novel in

Spanish literature is on a level with the same form in French or English literature. And, since the whole of a literature is contemporary with its potential reader in the sense that it is all available to him, it is of no importance, for purposes of value judgment, whether Europe in the thirteenth century had nothing in the drama comparable with the *Hsi hsiang chi;* the flourishing thirteenth-century Chinese drama must be compared with the drama of England or France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Having indicated the basis on which a relative value judgment of Chinese literature could be made, I shall refrain from attempting to make one, since obviously there is no room in an article of this scope for the necessary series of detailed, specific comparisons. However, I shall risk a few unsupported generalizations. Chinese literature offers examples of all the major literary genres found in European literature, except the epic. In the *Chin p' ing mei*[1] and the *Hung lou meng*[2] Chinese literature has novels which, for scope, subtle delineation of character, and elaborate plot, will rank with the greatest novels of the West. However, these stand as isolated achievements of the Chinese novel as a conscious art form. The novel appeared late in China (it was still rudimentary in the thirteenth century) and always retained unmistakable signs of the storyteller's tale out of which it developed. As a result it is usually diffuse, episodic, and without unity of conception. Written in colloquial Chinese and seldom taken seriously as literature, few Chinese novels are known as the work of a single author or exist in one version. Stylistically most are negligible. It was only in the seventeenth century that the written vernacular became a literary instrument capable of diverse stylistic effects, and then only in the works of a very few writers. I would rate the Chinese novel as qualitatively the equal of the European novel—in the two examples mentioned—but quantitatively inferior, that is, there are far fewer novels of the first or second rank.

The drama in China has nothing comparable to the great dramas of European literatures. It lacks any concept of tragedy; it is bound by a conventional morality of reward and punishment that occasionally produces melodrama but effectively prevents the development of tragic conflict.[3] Comedy on the Chinese stage seldom rises above farce. The

[1] There is a good translation by Clement Egerton under the title *The Golden Lotus,* 4 vols. (London, 1939). A retranslation from Franz Kuhn's abridged and expurgated German version (*Kin Ping Meh,* Leipzig, n.d.) was published with an introduction by Arthur Waley (*Chin Ping Mei,* London, 1939). Only the introduction is of interest; the translation adds to the deficiencies of its incomplete German original an intolerably coy English style.

[2] None of the existing partial translations of the *Dream of the Western Chamber* can be recommended. Franz Kuhn's *Der Traum der roten Kammer* (Leipzig, n.d.) is the most nearly complete.

[3] See the excellent article by Ch'ien Chung-shu, "Tragedy in Old Chinese Drama," *T'ien Hsia Monthly,* I (1935), 37-46.

best Chinese plays are those dealing with romantic love, a theme ordinarily avoided in serious Chinese literature. The thirteenth-century play *Hsi hsiang chi*[4] is the outstanding example of such a play; like all premodern Chinese plays, it is operatic in nature and relies on music and verse for its effects.

The supreme achievement of Chinese literature has been in lyric verse and song.[5] The earliest specimens go back to the first millenium B.C., and the tradition extends unbroken to the present day, though the great periods were the T'ang (618-906) and the Sung (960-1278) dynasties. The sheer bulk of surviving poetry is such that it is doubtful whether anyone in the past thousand years has ever read all that was available to be read during his lifetime. At all times a high level of technical competence was maintained in verse forms of considerable complexity, and the number of poets of all periods remembered for at least one anthologized lyric is tremendous.[6] Certainly no single European literature is comparable from a quantative point of view; and, qualitatively, Chinese poetry, though more limited in range, will stand up with that in any European language. Chinese offers a number of minor verse and prose forms without analogies in the West; especially notable is the *fu*, a form which exploits all the prosodic resources of the language without being committed to a fixed line length or definite stanza; it is rather like Amy Lowell's polyphonic prose, for which it may possibly have served as a model. In Chinese it is a full-fledged literary genre with specimens varying in length from a few lines to several hundreds of lines. Especially interesting is a tendency to reinforce its other effects with significant arrangements of graphic elements of the script, producing a purely visual appeal possible only in Chinese.

Chinese literature is well worth studying. The point I would insist on is that it is worth studying for its intrinsic interest, that it is worth reading for its literary value. I now turn to the second question, what contributions a study of Chinese literature can make to the understanding of literature in general.

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[4] The translation by S. I. Hsiung, *The Western Chamber* (New York, 1936), is essentially accurate but gives an inadequate impression of a play three-fourths of which is in verse. Henry Hart's translation is to be avoided.

[5] Chinese has no term as inclusive as the English "poetry." I am here discussing together the several form known as *shih*, *yüeh-fu*, *tz'u*, and *ch'ü*.

[6] Needless to say, very few Chinese poets have been translated at all. Complete translations into German prose of the T'ang poets, Tu Fu and Li Po, have been made by Erwin von Zach; unfortunately they were published for the most part in inaccessible Dutch and German periodicals in Java, or privately printed by the author. Less than one-fifth of Po Chü-i's poetry is available in Arthur Waley's excellent translations, *Chinese Poems* (London, 1946) and *The Life and Times of Po Chü-i* (London, 1949). Waley's *170 Chinese Poems* (New York, 1919) contains a fairly representative selection of pre-T'ang poets, but the poetry of the Sung Dynasty remains practically untouched, especially that in the *tz'u* form. But see T. K. Ch'u, *Chinese Lyrics* (Cambridge, 1937).

We hear a great deal about the dangers of compartmentalizing the study of the national literatures of Europe; it is asserted, and convincingly, that those literatures are so closely related, so subject to the same social and intellectual forces, that complete understanding of one is possible only in terms of the others. New techniques and disciplines have been developed for the recommended broader study of literature, and these tend to go under the heading of comparative literature. In its earliest stage comparative literature was concerned with influences of specific writers or specific works on writers who wrote in a different language: Goethe in England, Dante in France, Shakespeare in Germany. Such studies served a useful purpose; they provided interesting factual information and at the same time they tended to break down the barriers between the study of literatures in different languages. But it is hard to see any difference in kind between the influence of Poe on the French Symbolists and that of Donne on Eliot; in both cases the fact of influence is not an important factor in our enjoyment of the poet influenced, though it is important to the person interested in the historical development of a particular literature. The comparativist was merely extending the application of an accepted technique; he had yet to justify his existence as representing an independent discipline. A new approach grew logically out of these elementary efforts. But familiarity with more than one European literature inevitably drew attention to the existence of parallel literary movements. Romanticism was not peculiar to any one country or language, classicism in the seventeenth century was a European phenomenon. The literary manifestations of these movements or attitudes differed somewhat from one country to another, but there remains a basic similarity which can best be appreciated by studying the movement as something transcending linguistic barriers. The comparativist continues to be interested in influences and borrowings, but he has included in his field a much more complex group of phenomena. Literature remains his central interest, but he has become as well a historian of ideas.

What then has the study of Chinese literature to offer to the student of comparative literature so conceived? Not much, certainly. Conceivably he could apply the same techniques to Japanese literature as influenced by Chinese literature, or trace a few doubtful borrowings from India. But by and large the Far East offers no vast new fields to exploit.

There remains a task for the comparativist, however, which merits consideration and to the accomplishment of which the study of Chinese literature may make valuable contributions. This task is the comparison of literatures, not for possible mutual influences but even where the possibility of direct influence is ruled out. What can we expect to learn from such a comparison? Ultimately I think we might hope to discover what are the constants, the invariables of literature—the forms, modes,

tropes, and devices that appear when language is consciously employed for literary purposes. Such knowledge would help us arrive at a more satisfactory definition of literature than any we have arrived at on the basis of literary experience of only a small part of humanity.

There are other problems which might be illuminated by the kind of comparison I am advocating. Just as the student of political institutions benefits from a comparison between, say, European and Japanese feudalism or the social anthropologist from the study of unrelated cultures, so the student of literary institutions (e.g., genres) could profitably study the development of analogous literary forms in unrelated literatures. Chinese literature has most of the major genres known to European literatures. But they appeared in a very different society, where they performed similar or comparable functions. They had different life spans, they were supplanted by new genres. The factors affecting the life history of a literary form constitute a problem which should be studied in a larger context than that provided by any one literature or group of related literatures.

The comparative approach can also be applied with profit to the study of literary theory. Theories of literature obviously appear only when there is a literary tradition and an awareness of literature as an entity. Hence we can expect to find theories of literature formulated in the established written literatures. We know a good deal about the development of literary theory in Europe, a little about it in India, and practically nothing about Chinese literary theory. Here we may expect to find new attitudes, new points of view about the literary art, or perhaps only confirmation of our own views. In either case independent evidence would be of value.

Some of the most impressive literary criticism of modern times has come from the linguistic analysis of literary works. The application of this technique to a study of literature has made us aware of the basic problem of language and literature, how language functions in producing literary effects. Here again comparative materials should be of interest to the scholar, if only as a check on the validity of his conclusions. Detailed studies of this kind in Chinese can, of course, be made only by someone thoroughly versed in the language. The nonphonetic script has already attracted the attention of Western literary critics, some of whom have been misled into exaggerating its pictorial quality and into assuming that it represents a wholly different system of communication. The firsthand study of Chinese literature should dispel some of these misconceptions and at the same time lead to conclusions equally interesting and of greater value.

So far I have been concerned with the contributions a study of Chinese literature could make to the general study of literature. I wish to conclude with a word on the desirability of a knowledge of other litera-

tures by the student of Chinese literature. As a field of study Chinese literature is both new and unexplored—this despite the long unbroken tradition of Chinese literature and the high esteem in which literature has always been held in China. It is only in the twentieth century that systematic studies and surveys of the field have been attempted, and a great deal remains to be done in the way of basic studies of writers, periods, and genres before a really satisfactory general history of Chinese literature can be written. Much of the work that has been done has been by Chinese scholars who lacked a good grounding in any other literature than Chinese. What is needed now are scholars trained in the disciplines and techniques of literary study in one or more of the better-known literatures, who can apply those methods to the study of Chinese literature. Only through such studies can we expect Chinese literature to be faithfully interpreted, and the Western reader persuaded to accept Chinese literature as one of the literatures of the world deserving his attention.

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ULYSSEAN QUALITIES IN JOYCE'S LEOPOLD BLOOM

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THANKS mainly to Stuart Gilbert's researches, everyone now knows that Joyce adopted most of the structure and many of the motifs in his *Ulysses* from Homer's *Odyssey*.[1] But it is by no means so widely recognized that the characterization of Leopold Bloom is a legitimate development of the Homeric Odysseus. Indeed, many have felt a distinct incongruity between the title *Ulysses* and the man Bloom. It may, then, be worth while to consider just how much the Dublin Ulysses ethically resembles the Ithacan Odysseus.

First it must be observed that in a sense this distinction between character and action is illusory. A man becomes virtuous or evil, as Aristotle emphasized, by doing virtuous or evil deeds. Joyce, being a good Aristotelian and Thomist, must have been well aware that even a lower middle-class citizen of a modern Megalopolis would become Ulyssean by doing and suffering Odyssean things. But character may be distinguished from action when decisions and motives are given prominence, or when the chief concern is with a man's personal attitude to events. This is where one can determine whether Bloom is a genuine metempsychosis of Odysseus or not.

It should also be observed that it is misleading to confine the traditional conception of Ulysses to that of the *Odyssey* alone. The Ulysses myth has had a continuous life for almost three thousand years. Joyce was familiar with much of its post-Homeric development, in the Epic Cycle, in the Greek tragedians, in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Dante's *Inferno*, Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, Racine's *Iphigénie*, Fénelon's *Télémaque*, in Tennyson's lyrical monologue and Stephen Phillips's play on Ulysses, in Samuel Butler's and Bérard's studies on the *Odyssey*, and perhaps in Gerhard Hauptmann's *Der Bogen des Odysseus*. As has been discussed elsewhere, it was Charles Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses*, with its ample borrowings from Chapman, that first caught Joyce's twelve-year-old imagination and revealed the "mysticism" which pleased him in the Ulysses myth. All evidence tends to show what unremitting trouble Joyce took to master not merely

[1] *James Joyce's "Ulysses"* (London, 1930). Some additional parallels are given by Joseph Prescott, "Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses*," *MLQ*, III (1942), 427-444.

Homer's version but the whole literary tradition of Ulysses's exploits.[2]

Some of the critics who deny Bloom's right to be considered a legitimate Ulysses base their main objection on his unaristocratic condition of life. The traditional hero, they contend, is always of noble birth and breeding, and should act with nobility. There are two answers to this.

Though Odysseus in Homer is (by mere convention) an aristocrat, much of his conduct and many of his associates are far from aristocratic, especially in the *Odyssey*. In eighteen books out of the twenty in which Odysseus plays the leading part he is mostly either the storm-tossed sailor—"Head, redconecapped, buffeted, brineblinded," as Stephen visualizes him—or else disguised as a grubby old beggar, lodging with a swineherd, foully mocked by the insolent Suitors. His associates are not princely warlords or courtiers, but mainly monsters, servants, and cads. In the remoter past fastidious critics often blamed Homer for "low" elements like these, deeming them unworthy of heroic poetry—critics at the court of Ptolemy at Alexandria, at the court of Louis XIV in Versailles, and under the Georges and Victoria in London. But in fact, as Aristotle noted, the *Odyssey* is nearer to comedy, or, as modern critics have amended it, to the folk tale and the novel than to heroic epic or tragedy. Homer was no snob.[3] When Joyce is criticized for unheroic elements in Bloom, he is all the more clearly in the traditional succession. Besides, before him, Hauptmann, the seventeenth-century burlesque writers, and the Greek comic and satyric dramatists had in different ways and in different styles exploited the seamier side of the myth.

Further, in view of the widely varying transformations of Ulysses in the pre-Joycian tradition, how can one deny Joyce's right to create a lower middle-class Ulysses, provided that the essential Ulyssean qualities remain? In the mediaeval tradition Gower had conceived him as a clerk addicted to sorcery; Benoit and Lydgate had dressed him in knightly armor; Shakespeare had presented him as a suave Elizabethan negotiator, Vondel as a Dutch Calvinist, Calderón as a Catholic hidalgo, Goethe as the Primal Man. Stoics had seen him as a Stoic, Christians as a Christian or (with Dante) as a Lucifer. Statesmen had seen him as a statesman, bores as a bore, bigots as a bigot. Why should not Joyce in a cosmopolitan, agnostic, self-indulgent, chaotic, democratic age reincarnate him as Leopold Bloom? Homer made Odysseus a minor king as well as a much-enduring versatile man because Homer's world was controlled, both in politics and in literature, by monarchs and members of

[2] I am indebted to Mr. Stanislaus Joyce for confirming the fact that his brother was familiar with the less obvious works mentioned in this paragraph. For the influence of Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses*, see my articles in *The Listener* for July 19, 1951, pp. 99 and 105, and *Envoy*, XVII (1951), 62-69.

[3] Joyce discusses snobbish objections to Bloom as Ulysses in Frank Budgen's *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses*, p. 174.

royal houses. Joyce, with equally good reason, made Bloom a member of the lower middle class because much of Joyce's world was controlled by popular votes and men in public houses.

The true criterion of Bloom's authenticity as a Ulysses is not to be sought in the nature of his social environment but in the degree to which he possesses the traditional Ulyssean qualities—courage in action, wisdom in council, eloquence and tact in negotiation, a willingness to serve the common good, boldness and adroitness in leadership, resourcefulness and endurance in trouble, a desire for adventure conflicting with a love of home, and an all-pervading cleverness and versatility. Homer's Odysseus displays most of these qualities in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; but naturally the difference between life with the high command at Troy and in the fairy lands and domestic interiors of the *Odyssey* is reflected in a difference of emphasis. One sees, for example, little of Odysseus's public spirit in the *Odyssey* (except in his loyalty to his companions even in their worst follies) or of his adventurousness and wiliness in the *Iliad* (except in the night raid in Book Ten).

Joyce preferred the Odyssean to the Iliadic aspects of Ulysses. Further, with the Odyssean framework he gave much more attention to the Wanderings than to the Homecoming. The Wanderings occupy about three-fourths of *Ulysses*, the Return about one-fifth, and the Telemachy (Stephen's adventures before he meets Bloom) about one-fifteenth—compared with Homer's proportions of a half, one-third, and one-sixth. Three reasons may be surmised for this change in emphasis. First, the Wanderings offered more scope for what Joyce called "mysticism" than the other sections (except the Proteus episode). Second, in the underworld and demi-monde of Dublin in 1904, and also in Joyce's own mind later when *Ulysses* was being conceived, wanderings were more relevant than homecomings. If Joyce had been caught up in the nationalistic movement of 1916, he might have preferred to write an Irish *Iliad*.

The third reason involves a matter of major importance for an understanding of the Ulysses tradition. Homer's conception of Odysseus was that of a veteran eager to reach home after ten years of war but delayed by insurmountable obstacles for another nine years. It is true that Odysseus made the most of some of his opportunities for enjoyment during his wanderings, especially with Circe and Calypso. But his desire for home was always supreme. Against this, even in early classical times, there was a quite contradictory tradition of a Ulysses who ultimately preferred adventurous wandering to a happy home life. Dante presents the most vivid portrait of such an Ulysses in Canto Twenty-Six of his *Inferno*—an unforgettable image of the resolute seafarer setting out, like another Captain Ahab, with tense, metallic eloquence on his lips and a burning, fatal quest in his heart, to explore the unknown world.

This greatly influenced Tennyson in his "Ulysses" and Pascoli in "L'ultimo viaggio" (which Joyce may well have known).

Joyce provides the perfect word for this Dantesque conception. He calls Stephen "centrifugal" as opposed to the "centripetal" Bloom. There is only an apparent inconsistency in the fact that he applies "centrifugal" to his Telemachus, not to his Ulysses. The "consubstantiality of the Father and the Son" must be kept in mind. Elsewhere, too, Stephen takes over some of the traditional qualities of Ulysses. But Bloom, though ultimately centripetal, also feels some centrifugal yearnings. As soon as he leaves his house after breakfast he begins to think of "somewhere in the east . . . turbaned faces going by. Dark caves of carpet shops . . . Wander along all day . . ." The motif often recurs; when, for example, he looks into the window of the Belfast and Oriental Tea Company, and on the sea shore at Sandymount. In the Hospital Scene he is twice named "the traveller Leopold," and we are reminded of his "many marches environing in divers lands and sometime venery." His few books at home include *Three Trips to Madagascar, Voyages in China,* and *In the Track of the Sun* (from which his first soliloquy on traveling doubtless comes). When Bloom and Stephen converse with the garrulous old sailor in the cabman's shelter, his nautical stories rekindle Bloom's desire to see strange cities and peoples. Here Joyce deftly works in allusions to other famous wanderers, the Ancient Mariner, the Flying Dutchman, the Wandering Jew.

This last reference symbolizes an aspect of Bloom's desire for travel which derives neither from Homer nor from Dante. Joyce, prompted perhaps by Bérard's theory of Semitic influences on the *Odyssey*,[4] added great depth to the traditional yearning of Ulysses for "centripetal" wandering by making Bloom half Jewish. Besides longing at times for his home in Eccles St. during his diurnal journey through Edwardian Dublin, Bloom feels deep in his heart the exilic yearning of a Jew for his ancient homeland—"Agendath Netaim." Then the houses and streets of Dublin represent not the islands and straits of the Homeric wonderland, but the waters and willow trees of Babylon. This is something profounder, something more sacred than any previous nostalgia in the Ulysses tradition.

But amid all these symbolisms and wishful thinkings Bloom himself remains a realist. To satisfy his innate love of travel he reconsiders a little voyage quite within his powers:

. . . nevertheless it reminded him in a way of a longcherished plan he meant to one

[4] Cf. Joyce's remark (in Frank Budgen, *op. cit.*, p. 174), "There's a lot to be said for the theory that the Odyssey is a Semitic poem." For Joyce's Jewish friends and his admiration of Jews as "better husbands than we are, better fathers and better sons," see Eugene Jolas in *james joyce: two decades of criticism*, ed. Seon Givens (New York, 1948), p. 23.

day realise some Wednesday or Saturday of travelling to London *via* long sea not to say that he had ever travelled extensively to any great extent but he was at heart a born adventurer though by a trick of fate he had consistently remained a land-lubber except you call going to Holyhead which was his longest.

There is both irony and pathos here in the contrast between this bourgeois, humble ambition of a "born adventurer" and the stark all-or-nothing resolve of Dante's Ulysses,

> l'ardore
> ch' i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto,
> e delli vizi umani e del valore,

which coerced him and his companions to their destruction. Yet, can it considerately be said that Bloom's "abnegation," here as elsewhere, is less noble than the Dantean Ulysses's self-indulgence? And can it be said that Bloom learned less "of human vices and men's worthiness" by threading the streets of Dublin than Dante's unsocial Ulysses had learned by sailing out to gain experience "di retro al sol, del mondo senza gente"?

Just before Bloom lies down to sleep, the wanderlust seizes him most strongly. He imagines himself visiting alone and with delighted wonder the most famous scenes in Europe and traveling on to "Thibet" and the Eskimos, steering by the stars over the sea. Thence, as his imagination soars on its last free flight, he conceives a vast interstellar odyssey and a spectacularly heroic return:

Ever he would wander, selfcompelled, to the extreme limit of his cometary orbit, beyond the fixed stars and variable suns and telescopic planets, astronomical waifs and strays, to the extreme boundary of space, passing from land to land, among peoples, amid events. Somewhere imperceptibly he would hear and somehow reluctantly, suncompelled, obey the summons of recall. Whence, disappearing from the constellation of the Northern Crown he would somehow reappear reborn above delta in the constellation of Cassiopeia and after incalculable eons of peregrination return an estranged avenger, a wreaker of justice on malefactors, a dark crusader, a sleeper awakened, with financial resources (by supposition) surpassing those of Rothschild or of the silver king.

This, on the cosmic imaginative scale, is the supreme adventure of Bloom's adventurous mind, a conception beyond anything in the previous Ulysses tradition, carrying with it much of that potent scientific romanticism which modern astrophysicists have inherited from ancient astrologers and much of the spirit of Dante's doomed hero.

But the last phrase in Bloom's soliloquy brings his star-scattering rocket flight down in a steep plunge to earth. Bloom's realism has pricked the bubble of his imagination, as so often before. In the three following questions and answers, he reminds himself philosophically and practically that, Bloom being Bloom, his best course is simply to go to bed. Though half a Wandering Jew, and though partly infected with

the centrifugal wanderlust of Dante's heroic explorer, Bloom conforms to the Homeric pattern of the tired, centripetal Returned Husband, safe back at the end in his nuptial bed.[5] His inveterate desire to travel peters out in an evanescent repetition of the Sinbad the Sailor theme, his last words in the book, fading away into a tranquil incoherence and a deep domestic slumber.[6]

In *Ulysses,* then, as in the *Odyssey,* the Wanderings end with the Return. But traditionalists sometimes complained at missing a spectacular scene which occurs towards the end of Homer's poem. Odysseus still in disguise has performed the appointed tests: he has strung the bow; he has shot the arrow through the ax heads; now he suddenly throws aside his disguise, leaps onto the threshold of his hall, and slaughters the Suitors. This ruthless slaughter seemed "unUlyssean" to Joyce,[7] partly, no doubt, through his own detestation of violence and bloodshed and partly because a wise and "good" man would naturally avoid it. Perhaps in the comparatively halcyon days of the early 1900s this kind of savagery seemed archaic and unnecessary—as it certainly was, and is, un-Christian. Joyce substituted a psychological victory. Bloom, by means of "abnegation," equanimity, and general goodheartedness, triumphs over all envy and hatred of the usurping Boylan. In this way he achieves a humble peace of mind, recognizing "the futility of triumph or protest or vindication: the inanity of extolled virtue: the lethargy of nescient matter: the apathy of the stars."

It is hardly necessary to illustrate in detail many of the other traditional qualities in Bloom—his prudence in dealing with his associates ("Gob, he's a prudent member and no mistake"), his caution ("Mr. Cautious Calmer"), his tactfulness and self-control in negotiations, his imaginative eloquence, his intellectual and practical versatility, and his sensuous enjoyment of everyday things. On the other hand, his environment naturally inhibited some of the traditional heroic traits. One must not expect feats of Iliadic valor here, any more than in the wonderland of Homer's *Odyssey.* Sheer courage and violent combats would be as futile against the Dubliners of 1904 as against the cannibal Laestrygonians and Cyclopes and the Sirens and goddesses of Ulysses's primi-

[5] Joyce accepted the theory of Alexandrian critics that the *Odyssey* originally ended at line 296 of Book XXIII with the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus.

[6] The last phrase in Bloom's drowsy mutterings, "Darkinbad the Brightdayler," may hint at theories interpreting Ulysses as a personification of the sun and the *Odyssey* as a solar myth.

[7] For Joyce's view on the Slaughter of the Suitors, see Budgen, *op. cit.,* pp. 262-263 and cf. pp. 635, 694 of *Ulysses* (John Lane, London, 1947). In a way there is a Homeric parallel to Bloom's recognition of "the futility of triumph." In *Odyssey* XXII, 411 ff., after Odysseus has slain the Suitors, he forbids Eurycleia to exult on the grounds that they have simply got their deserts at the hand of heaven. But Homer's intention is not quite clear; see further in the note *ad loc.* in my edition of the *Odyssey.*

tive wanderings. Joyce, however, when he does reveal Bloom's innate valor, keeps faithfully to his Homeric pattern. As in the *Odyssey* Odysseus taunted the blinded Cyclops valorously but imprudently and almost brought total destruction on himself and his companions, so Bloom provokes the fury of the firbolgs in Barney Kiernan's pub by speaking as valorously and imprudently in vindication of the Jews. Odysseus plunged into the dark wood, despite all warnings, to rescue his companions from Circe, when others would have left them to wallow forever in her enchanted sties; Bloom, with equal loyalty, rescues Stephen from Nighttown. In prudence, too, there is an exact parallel later; both Bloom and Odysseus omit all mention of Nausicaä in narrating their wanderings to Penelope.

By making Bloom of Jewish descent Joyce is able to deepen another traditional characteristic of Ulysses. Odysseus is unique among the Homeric heroes for his love of his family and his homeland, Ithaca. In Bloom these affections are given a double power. He has a genuine love for Ireland (and, as will be discussed later, a latent desire to improve her condition); but at a deeper level he has the Jews' ancestral yearning for Zion. A Jewish intensity of feeling may be intended, too, in his poignant love for his family. Here, however, some adjustments had to be made to suit Joyce's autobiographical interest in Stephen. Rudy, Bloom's natural Telemachus, is displaced by Stephen as Bloom's temporarily adopted Telemachus; and Ulysses's Homeric love for his mother is changed into Stephen's conscience-stricken remembrance of his. Another alteration of the tradition is due to the spirit of Bloom's and Joyce's age. Homer's Odysseus was always pious, god-fearing, and god-beloved (apart from the wrath of Poseidon). Bloom, as polytropic (to adapt Homer's epithet in the first line of the *Odyssey*) in his creeds as in his interests and affections, has discarded all formal religion for a vaguely scientific optimism. Yet, if man could be justified by works alone, Bloom's meekness and compassion, his considerateness and kindness to men and animals, his gentleness and self-control, contrasting so strongly with the lack of these Christian qualities in the professing Christians who associate with him, might well justify him. The contrast in the Cyclops Scene between his restraint and the blasphemous oaths of his persecutors (with their devotion to the Holy Name) is, of course, satirical.[8]

One of Bloom's characteristics goes far beyond anything in the classical tradition. This is his amorousness and eroticism. Joyce could, of

[8] For Joyce's statement that Ulysses was a "good man," see Budgen, *op cit.*, pp. 18, 107, and contrast the *Oxford English Dictionary* on "Ulyssean": "Characteristic of, or resembling Ulysses in craft or deceit . . ." with the quotation: "It is said . . . that the modern Greeks are Ulyssean in this respect, never telling the straightforward truth when deceit will answer the purpose."

course, point to the complaisance of Odysseus with Circe and Calypso; but they were magical beings, and by express divine command had to be appeased, whether Odysseus liked it or not. Odysseus was never unfaithful to Penelope with a mortal woman. Unlike many of the other Iliadic heroes he had no paramour at Troy. But Bloom in both thought and deed has long been a cautious amorist, and in his amorousness there is a vein of sensual exoticism quite unparalleled in the whole tradition, with one exception—Calderón's Ulysses. One need not suppose direct literary influence here. But Molly Bloom's name for Leopold, "Don Poldo de la Flora," may be more than either the expression of a passing fancy or an allusion to Don Juan (and *Don Giovanni*).[9]

Though Joyce's interest was principally in the Odyssean Ulysses, he made use of one marked quality of the Iliadic type. In the *Iliad* and its imitations Ulysses shows unique ability and readiness to serve the *bonum publicum*, whether as a diplomat, as a politician, as a negotiator, or even as a spy. Some writers like Homer, Sophocles (in the *Ajax* but not in the *Philoctetes*), Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida*, Le Bossu, and Fénelon praised him for this public spirit and political dexterity, and were prepared to condone his obliquities. Others, like Euripides, Seneca, and Racine presented it in an unfavorable light, making Ulysses unscrupulous, ruthless, self-seeking, demagogic, and ambitious.

In *Ulysses* Bloom, though thwarted by his social condition, secretly wishes to play a typically Ulyssean part in high politics. Ambitiously in his delirium in Nighttown, he sees himself as "alderman sir Leo Bloom," later to be the popular lord mayor of Dublin. Afterwards in the searching, catechetical silence of his home it is revealed that his political hopes are not entirely selfish as in the Euripidean tradition. If he were given a chance he would try to be a genuine political and social reformer —"because at the turningpoint of human existence he desired to amend many social conditions, the product of inequality and avarice and international animosity." He had thought deeply on justice and on what Shakespeare's Ulysses calls degree. He had loved rectitude from his earliest youth. Schemes for increasing Ireland's wealth and prosperity abound in his fertile brain. But in his more realistic moments he knows he will never be a national leader like that Parnell whose hat he had once handed back. The best use he can, and does, make of his sagacity and tact is to pacify and moderate the passions and follies of his associates. Yet, *mutatis mutandis*, is this much different in the end from what Ulysses had to do with the passions and follies of Agamemnon, Achilles,

[9] Denis Florence MacCarthy's brilliant but sadly neglected translations of Calderón's two remarkable plays on Ulysses, *Love the Greatest Enchantment* and *The Sorcerics of Sin*, appeared in 1861 and were accessible to Joyce in the Dublin National Library. A "Denis M'Carthy's *Poetical Works*" is listed among Bloom's books—presumably his *Poems* (Dublin, 1882; 2nd ed. 1884).

Ajax, and Thersites in the *Iliad* and in *Troilus and Cressida*? But in both *Troilus and Cressida* and in *Ulysses* Ulysses at least gains temporarily from heaven a consolation which he was denied in the *Iliad*—a friend. Shakespeare's poignant scene between Ulysses and the disillusioned Troilus has more than an accidental resemblance to the later scenes between Bloom and Stephen.

If one were asked what was the most characteristic quality of Ulysses in all his reincarnations, the certain answer would be: cleverness in the widest sense, a cleverness ranging from the highest wisdom and intelligence to the lowest cunning. In the trials of the *Odyssey* in which his life and happiness are constantly at stake, his cleverness is generally of the less exalted kind, evasive and deceitful. In the *Iliad* it is naturally confined to military and political matters. But already in the *Odyssey* one finds the beginnings of that intellectual curiosity which became a salient feature in the later Ulysses tradition. It was a typical Greek quality, this eagerness to learn new things (as St. Paul remarked in Athens long after Homer's time), though no Homeric hero shows any tendency towards it except Ulysses; Dante seized on this characteristic as the ultimate cause of Ulysses's doom. Gower in his *Confessio Amantis* made Ulysses the complete polymath:

> He was a worthi knyht and king
> And clerk knowende of every thing;
> He was a gret rethorien,
> He was a gret magicien;
> Of Tullius the rethorique,
> Of king Zorastes the magique,
> Of Tholome thastronomie,
> Of Plato the Philosophie,
> Of Daniel the slepi dremes,
> Of Neptune ek the water stremes,
> Of Salomon and the proverbes,
> Of Macer al the strengthe of herbes,
> And the Phisique of Ypocras,
> And lich unti Pictagoras
> Of Surgerie he knew the cures.

One could hardly ask for a stronger academic testimonial. But, alas, Gower goes on to tell how all this talent was brought low by an addiction to "Sorcerie." It is the same moral as Dante's, but rather more crudely expressed.

Bloom shares in this traditional love of knowledge. In spite of his lack of any higher education and despite his intellectual naivety, he is something of a polymath. His meager library at 7 Eccles St. includes two books on astronomy and one on geometry (the primary Greek sciences), besides odd volumes on theology, philosophy, history, and travel. Astronomy is his special interest. The mysteriously suggestive

word "parallax" (from Ball's *Story of the Heavens* among his books) is a recurrent motif. In suggesting this special interest in astronomy Joyce closely follows the tradition. In the *Iliad,* in the *Odyssey,* in Dante, in Tennyson's *Ulysses,* and in Gower as quoted above, Ulysses is credited with special knowledge of the stars.

Bloom's other intellectual interests have been listed elsewhere.[10] They extend from aspects of ventriloquism to problems concerning foot-and-mouth disease. Through all his fleeting speculations some essentially Greek qualities prevail—a childlike sense of wonder, an omnivorous curiosity, a gift for seizing on the essential point, a freedom from dogmatism, a readiness to admit ignorance and to ask questions. His lack of training prevents him from systematic thought, but it also preserves him from the besotting influences of academic jargon. Abstruse terms, like metempsychosis and parallax, affect him with an almost religious awe. It is noteworthy too that, despite his carnality, Bloom sometimes approaches that sensuous admiration of pure form which so often raises Greek art above the merely mundane. He loves music, the most spiritual of the arts and the basis of Greek education. Plato or Zeno would have welcomed him as a pupil. As Buck Mulligan put it (but hardly in a complimentary sense), "he is Greeker than the Greeks."

This supreme Ulyssean cleverness exacts one bitter penalty throughout the tradition. From Homer to Joyce, Ulysses is lonely and often unpopular, especially among men. Women, whether divine like Athena and Circe or human like Helen and Penelope, tend to recognize his feminine qualities of sensitiveness, intuitive wisdom, and personal alertness. They treat him as an equal in subtlety, and like him for it. But men, whether the passionate, vainglorious Achilles or the stolid Ajax, dislike him, always suspecting him of some ulterior motive. Bloom suffers the same fate. In the Cyclops Scene the anonymous narrator (like Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida,* on which he is directly modeled[11]) ironically calls him "the distinguished scientist Herr Professor Luitpold Blumenduft." The assembled Goths detest his "jawbreakers about phenomenon and science and this phenomenon and the other phenomenon." "Mister Knowall," they call him in loutish mockery. Once, earlier, a note of approbation is heard, in Lenehan's remark to M'Coy: "He's a

[10] See the analysis of Bloom's "Temperament, Personality and Opinions" in Richard M. Kain's *Fabulous Voyager* (Chicago, 1947), pp. 243-251, for further illustrations of Bloom's scientific interests, political views, and personal characteristics.

[11] Mr. Stanislaus Joyce has informed me that it was a performance of *Troilus and Cressida* in German at Zürich which suggested the "Thersites" (i.e., the anonymous narrator of the Cyclops episode) to Joyce. In Budgen, *op. cit.,* p. 169, James Joyce remarks apropos of this figure: "You see 'I' is really a great admirer of Bloom, who, besides being a better man, is also more cunning, a better talker, and more fertile in expedients. If you reread *Troilus and Cressida* you will see that of all the heroes Thersites respects only Ulysses. Thersites admires Ulysses."

cultured allroundman, Bloom is, he said seriously. He's not one of your common or garden . . . you know . . . There's a touch of the artist about old Bloom." But this is quite exceptional and evokes no response. At home, too, he has tried to awaken some intellectual interest in his Penelope, and has failed. She prefers less cerebral means of approach to the Tree of Knowledge.

The fact that Bloom is partly Jewish increases his sense of loneliness and intensifies the Dubliner's dislike for him. Similarly in late classical and mediaeval times anti-Greek and pro-Roman prejudice had prevented the traditional Ulysses from enjoying literary popularity. Virgil's *Aeneid*, Benoît's *Roman de Troie*, Lydgate's *Troy Tale*, Caxton's *Recuyell* are only a few of the influential works that chauvinistically denigrate him as the typically deceitful Greek, the archenemy of the noble Trojans.[12] But Bloom's Semitic ancestry also tends to enhance his intellectual and intuitional abilities—"Jewgreek is greekjew."

After Bloom meets Stephen it seems for a while as if he will escape at last from his intellectual isolation. Stephen has a much better trained mind. In contrast with Bloom's multifarious ill-assorted knowledge, his is systematic and teleological in the Aristotelian tradition of his teachers. Though he has had much less experience of life and humanity than Bloom, he has read and reasoned far more. Yet, as between Shakespeare's Troilus and Ulysses, there is a natural affinity between these two, even though it only holds them together for a short while.

Once Bloom has become intimate with this Telemachus by their ordeal in Circe's den and by their subsequent adventures together, he begins to hope that he has at last found the son, the kindred spirit, he has so long desired. Intellectually things go well at first, when the miasma of Nighttown has lifted from their brains. Polymaths both, they deliberate encyclopaedically on

> Music, literature, Ireland, Dublin, Paris, friendship, woman, prostitution, diet, the influence of gaslight or the light of arc and glowlamps on the growth of adjoining paraheliotropic trees, exposed corporation emergency dust-buckets, the Roman Catholic church, ecclesiastical celibacy, the Irish nation, jesuit education, careers, the study of medicine, the past day, the maleficent influence of the pre-sabbath, Stephen's collapse.

They exchange reminiscences and discuss prejudices frankly. But slowly the primeval divisions, racial, ideological, and temperamental, drag them asunder. The Irishman and the Jew, the Aristotelian and the Platonist, the artistic and the scientific mind, the Trojan and the Greek, the young man and the middle-aged, with the best will in the world can never achieve a marriage of true minds. Deviously but ineluctably their conversation leads on to a parting, to "the disunion of their (respec-

[12] I have discussed mediaeval denigrations of Ulysses in "Studies in the Characterization of Ulysses, IV and V," *Hermathena*, LXXVII-LXXVIII (1951).

tively) centrifugal and centripetal hands." The epithets mark their deepest disharmony. Bloom, for all his Jewish exilic yearnings, accepts life as it is in Dublin in 1904. His is Homer's creed, the politician's "art of the possible." Stephen, despite his deeper roots in the life and thought of Ireland, is doomed to be far more of a Wandering Jew. Like Dante's Ulysses, no love of home or parents can hold him now. Like Shakespeare's Troilus, he is too completely disillusioned to be soothed by any Ulyssean eloquence. His face is set towards the free unexplored world, Bloom's towards his connubial bedroom in No. 7 Eccles St.

When Stephen leaves him Bloom feels a chill of loneliness that only the would-be scientist in him can assess. "The cold of interstellar space, thousands of degrees below freezing point or the absolute zero of Fahrenheit, Centigrade or Réaumur . . ." This is a "lonechill" unparalleled in all the vicissitudes of the lonely Ulysses. But despair is not a Ulyssean trait. Gradually Bloom gathers up the threads of his humdrum domestic existence, enters his bedroom, humbly salutes his wife, tells her as much as is prudent of his day's adventures, and falls, murmuring of Sinbad the Sailor, asleep.

Nothing in the long tradition between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* equals this in tranquility or in realistic acceptance of life's limitations. As an ending it harmonizes with the character and environment of the Dublin Ulysses as truly as Homer's ending fits the Ithacan context. The differences between Homer and Joyce here, as in their whole portraits of Ulysses, are differences of idiom not of axiom.

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OSCAR LEVERTIN: SWEDISH CRITIC OF FRENCH REALISM

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THE NAME of Oscar Levertin, Swedish poet, writer, critic, and literary historian is scarcely known beyond the limits of Scandinavian literary-historical circles. His considerable achievements, particularly in the field of cultural interchanges, deserve wider recognition among students of comparative literature. He introduced to a Sweden largely ignorant of them the great writers of nineteenth-century France, and he did this in large part by developing the then little-used techniques of journalistic criticism.

Born in 1862 in Stockholm, of Jewish parents, Levertin was always to feel somewhat a stranger in his passionately loved native land. In 1906, when he was 44, he died of the tuberculosis which had haunted him for many years. His life was full, not of external events, but of literary, intellectual, emotional, artistic adventure. At Uppsala, he took his doctorate under the guidance of the noted Henrik Schück, writing his dissertation on a French subject. His docentship was earned through a piece of research which involved both French and Swedish theater in the eighteenth century. He lectured in Uppsala, was appointed professor of literary history at the University of Stockholm, and continued in that position, while also writing poetry and daily reviews and articles in *Svenska Dagbladet,* until his death.

By training and temperament, Levertin was disposed to love French literature. His interest had its origin in his early reading of Brandes, whose *Hovedstrømninger,* won as a school prize in 1880, made an immediate and tremendous impression on him. In a review in 1890 Levertin says that coming from school books to Brandes was like "moving from a little strictly divided and limited garden plot into a wonderfully rich and endless park . . . it was an overwhelming feeling of the immeasurably great and incalculably rich in humanity's cultural activity . . ."[1]

From Brandes Levertin learned the importance of foreign literature, particularly French, both in terms of cultural history and as human document.[2] He did not follow Brandes—or any other critic—blindly

[1] Quoted from Holger Ahlenius, *Georg Brandes i svensk literatur till och med 1890* (Stockholm, 1932), p. 349.

[2] Werner Söderhjelm, *Oscar Levertin: en minnesteckning* (Stockholm, 1917), II, 303.

and was himself a more exact and objective investigator than Brandes and less of a dogmatist and agitator.[3] In his speech at a celebration for Brandes in Stockholm in 1906 his enthusiastic and generous praise of his master's contribution to literary studies is qualified in a characteristic way: "Georg Brandes for us in the North has been not only a high aesthetic authority but also a teacher." But he went on, addressing Brandes: "We don't swear by your words and opinions. You yourself have taught us not to do that, even in the case of the best authorities."[4]

Levertin owed a considerable debt to many other critics from whose works and systems he took what was useful for him. Herman Bang influenced his general attitude toward literary evidence; he drew some of his arguments from *Realisme og realister* when he wrote polemic articles as a spokesman for the younger generation.

Brandes set him reading Taine, Sainte-Beuve, Brunetière, and, perhaps most important, Renan. Of Taine, Levertin said in 1900 that

> his inner spiritual tragedy was his despairing attempt to impart to history the character of an exact discipline of certainty and demonstration. He got the idea from Comte ... but could only make a stately structure whose inner degree of probability was scarcely greater than is found in an historical romantic like Michelet.[5]

Levertin's concept of an essay shows him to be a follower of Sainte-Beauve. "An essay is, in a certain way, a dispute between two people ... and the better the essayist knows himself the more breadth to his life, the richer his thought, the greater likelihood he has of making progress."[6] From Sainte-Beuve, too, came Levertin's sense of the writer's duty to reflect the community, his conscientious grounding of his judgments on scientific method, and his effort to understand everything and love everything, never to hate or condemn anything. From the same source came the determination to "burn with a kind of discerning ardor which does not exclude cold-bloodedness," as Faguet said. Like Sainte-Beuve, Levertin preferred, to systematic method, a conscientiousness, sympathy, and desire for penetrating and intelligent understanding. He was, again like Sainte-Beuve, a creative as well as a critical writer, but was never guilty of such subjective pettiness as Sainte-Beuve showed toward Balzac, Musset, and Vigny. And, lastly, whereas Sainte-Beuve saw differences, important separations, everywhere, Levertin tried to get wholeness and synthesis. He enjoyed Brunetière's love of French classicism but did not cling to the Frenchman's theory of authority or to the belief in "l'évolution des genres." He had, to a considerable de-

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 481; Fredrik Böök, *Oscar Levertin* (Stockholm, 1944), p. 191.
[4] Oscar Levertin, *För och mot* (Stockholm, 1910), in *Samlade skrifter*, XXIV, 18.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[6] Söderhjelm, *op. cit.*, II, 228.

gree, a poet's basic subjectivity, together with a lively interest in historical background.[7]

He read much Renan, and the essay on him in 1892 reveals an enthusiastic admiration of his erudition and lack of pedantry, his blend of feeling and clear thinking. Levertin felt that Renan was to a great extent the product of his background in Brittany, and that Chateaubriand's land gave a romantic and imaginative direction to one of the great thinkers of the time. He felt that Renan combined several disciplines and that in his case irony was a dialectic and idealism a life-long necessity. Renan's blend of positivism and mysticism, his "smiling skepticism," appealed strongly to the same strains in Levertin himself.[8]

A closer look at one aspect of Levertin's critical activity—his concern with French realism—will serve to show in action the theories he derived from his teachers and his own predispositions, and to suggest his significant contribution to Swedish literary history.

His first article, in 1883, was a thoughtful interpretation of *Ghosts*, linking it with the Greek tragedy of destiny, as did Brandes, but also finding a "key" to it in Balzac's *La Femme de trente ans*.[9] In succeeding articles Levertin dealt with most of the great literary figures of the day, among them Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, Bourget, Maupassant, Björnson, Jacobsen, and Turgenev.

Söderhjelm's critical appraisal of Levertin stresses the seriousness of his approach, his moral idealism, his concern with psychological content and with the basic purpose of the author. When Levertin turns to French writers he presents the best aspects and the essential character of the work under consideration. He is concerned, for instance, with the exact erotic psychology, the background of mystic and unanswered questions on life, in Bourget's *Cruelle Énigme*. In Daudet's *Sapho* he attacks the lack of psychological depth and in Maupassant the too great sensuality and the lack of lyricism and tenderness. Zola's *La Joie de vivre* appeals to him especially because he finds in it an attempt to define life's "tremendous mystery." In 1885, in *Ur Dagens Krönika*, he expressed, too, the warmest admiration for the humanitarian spirit of *Germinal*. He felt Zola to be the great democrat of modern literature, an opinion which, as will be seen, never changed. When Levertin was touched personally, his praise became very warm—as in his comment on the hymn to death in *Bel-Ami*.[10]

This early criticism reveals not only the generous enthusiast and the stern upholder of uncompromising standards but also the skeptic and

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 304 ff.

[8] Oscar Levertin, *Diktare och drömmare* (Stockholm, 1908), in *Samlade skrifter*, VIII, 152 ff.

[9] Söderhjelm, *op. cit.*, II, 33.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

doubter, who was to emerge more fully in later years. His incisive criticism of Flaubert, even in the early reviews, expresses the dual nature both of Flaubert's work and of Levertin's own temperament. His first comment (in a letter) on *Madame Bovary* is that it makes a "disheartening impression," but he finds *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* "modern literature's most colorful work of fiction," one which is "grandly conceived" because all mankind is described therein.[11]

Levertin was partial to contemporary French novels because of their clarity and precision, and his judgments remain strikingly valid. The English novels of the day struck him, on the other hand, as works of "prissy flabbiness and circumstantial monotony."[12] In his own creative writings he used new French literary methods of observation. The views he developed on philosophic and social matters continued basically unchanged, but he was a severe and independent judge of all literature,[13] regardless of its social import, and did not tolerate what seemed to him petty and sterile in conception.[14]

At the end of the 1880s, he was forced by his recurring illness to spend a considerable time at Davos, where he came to know very well the novelist and poet Verner von Heidenstam. Out of this close association with a very different temperament came certain changes in Levertin's viewpoint—a re-evaluation of the positivistic principles espoused earlier and a reorientation in more lyric and imaginative terms toward literature and the world. He continued vigorously and enthusiastically his studies of Swedish literary periods and personalities, and his knowledge of his country's cultural history became increasingly extensive and authoritative. What chiefly concerns us, however, is his further critical work on French realistic writing.

Heidenstam had felt strongly the need for a critical and literary organ in which new theories might be presented. In the 1880s there was no journal in which Swedish writers might write the new criticism and express their opinions freely. For a few years, to be sure, the columns of *Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet*, and *Ur Dragens Krönika* had been open to them. But the archconservative critic, Carl David af Wirsén, succeeded in ousting any but conservative opinion from these journals. With his customary energy Heidenstam saw to it that Levertin was installed as a regular contributor to *Svenska Dagbladet*. The persuasive and impressive character of his essays and reviews awakened great interest in the Swedish reading public, and helped create for *Svenska Dagbladet* a reputation for integrity of thought and taste in literary matters which it enjoys to this day.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

From the vast number of Levertin's reviews and essays in *Svenska Dagbladet* and elsewhere, representative ones have been published in his collected works. The range of his interest is wide, and his treatment of his subjects in general accords with his professed theories of critical duty. He usually does not assume any background knowledge in his audience. In order to make comprehensible the particular work he is discussing, he gives a general picture of the author and his writing. Sometimes, however, his enthusiasm brushes aside such helps to the uninformed and concentrates exclusively on the aspect of the work most appealing to his own taste.

The Goncourts were important to Levertin. He admired their scholarship in recreating eighteenth-century France and was influenced by it in his own studies of France and of Sweden. As an art critic, too, he was impressed by their discernment and taste. His long essay on Edmond de Goncourt[15] is worth paraphrasing in part, to suggest the vivacity of Levertin's style, the warmth of his reactions, and the range of subjects suggested to his mind by the Goncourts.

In *Germinie Lacerteux* and *Renée Mauperin* he says there are to be found great originality of idea, a sparkling virtuosity which somehow does not "convince the nerves" as do Balzac and George Sand, both of whom are perhaps inferior in idea and presentation. The realistic novels have a "thesis-like" quality, a "scientific-ism," which often seems cold in Flaubert, foolish in Zola.

The pioneers of the realistic novel, Levertin maintains, were all baptized in the same hope, and their writings have a family resemblance in their superior attitude toward all forms of the romantic and their enthusiastic belief in the positive. Taine's first work, dramatically cutting and enraptured at the same time, is typical of all the coming men in the 1850s and 1860s. Renan, too, in his youthful *L'Avenir de la science*, placed all hope in exact research. Levertin believes that writers hoped for too much from science and were too close to Jean-Jacques Rousseau to accept the resignation and submission which are the sum of the teaching of both nature and science.

He points out that the Goncourts founded their method when the factual was still the watchword of the day. Their novels are little social monographs. What in Flaubert is antiquarian prolixity and in Zola is a superficial juggling with Darwinian theory, which made the man of Médan a biological Flammarion, is in the Goncourts an investigative purpose. Their books are "cases" from the community polyclinic. They are notes from a scratch pad put together into a novel. The kaleidoscopic pictures, sparkling with the life of the moment, bewilder; they destroy each other's impression and possess no real unity.

[15] Levertin, *Diktare och drömmare*, pp. 172 ff.

Levertin holds that the "scientific" method, exemplified by the Goncourts, with its accumulation of material, its respect for document, has been the very stumbling block on which realism has fallen. Zola achieved the world's record with *Rome*—the eternal city's history, art, ancient days, present and future, all sketched in small notebooks during three weeks of conscientious work in the city on the Tiber.

> Oh, Honoré de Balzac [Levertin writes], you who locked yourself up dressed in a monk's gown, and in a fever created your tragi-comic world—more than the mirror image, the explanation of the real world—you scarcely thought of clippings and note-books. You sat at your desk and the world-in-making roared through your brain. You created like God the Father—out of yourself, earth, yes, and people. It became a world, beautiful and bewildering, confusing and dizzy, like the real, or more so—with heroes and monsters, gold and sin and white flowers which budded in the shadows, and the hate in distorted faces and crowds in the streets. Your scrap-gathering students are more serious folk—they believe that the "gay science" needs actuaries and registrars. They make entries of the small circumstances of life, with the reporter's deification of bagatelle.[16]

The Goncourts' observation of reality is an end in itself, not a springboard from which the artist hurls himself into an unknown sphere. But their little pictures of modern life should be remembered because—together with *Madame Bovary*—they introduced a great and unique movement in French literature. Moreover, as historians the Goncourts made excellent use of their descriptive abilities, and their work, taken together with Taine's *Les Origines de la France contemporaine,* depicted the development of the modern Frenchman.

In *Svenska Dagbladet* in 1898[17] Levertin turned sympathetically and understandingly toward Huysmans, whom he calls the most gifted of the young men Zola introduced in naturalism's heyday. In an attempt to come close to the problems of Huysmans, Levertin pictures his lonely sensitivity, his morbid need to find the truth in ugliness only. None the less, his dark and burning fancy is related to Breughel and Van der Weyden. His embittered energy and intensity is devoted to showing life as a street ballad, an unappetizing color print. His novels about himself are ill-composed, lacking Gallic architecture. Life for him becomes gray and cold, with no illusions, and he can find no comfort in dreams. Huysmans, like Strindberg (whom Levertin disliked on many counts) proceeds from an attitude of irresponsible materialism to one of equally irresponsible Catholic mysticism. The spectacle of what to Levertin was Huysmans' degradation of will and denial of life is painfully distasteful. The pages on Huysmans' work are, however, almost resolutely fair, though the unflattering judgment emerges clearly. Passionately sensual himself, Levertin does not condemn Huysmans on that score, but for

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 177.
[17] Levertin, *Diktare och drömmare*, pp. 186-195.

the essential loss of human dignity and responsibility and the waste of powers which his attitude entailed. In his later days Levertin felt differently, not about organized religion, but about a mystic view of life. In 1898, however, he thought Huysmans "touches, like all mysticisms, the puerile and foolish."[18]

In the volume *För och mot* there is an essay which may be mentioned in passing as a significant expression of Levertin's personal sense of kinship with France. "Paris and the Revision" deals with Levertin's experience of Paris during the Dreyfus case. The anxious waiting for the decision, the agonized sense that literary and religious mysticism were uniting with clerical reaction in supporting injustice and prejudice, were a severe strain on Levertin's basic faith in France and also on his philosophical conviction. The positive intellectualism of Taine, Renan, and Zola he had to some extent rejected, and, disconcertingly, that spirit seemed to be in the vanguard of the struggle with Catholic chauvinism and antisemitism.[19] The essay ends with a sigh of relief that Paris, the city of Molière and Voltaire, the city of intellectual freedom, has not denied its heritage.

When in 1901 the first Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Sully-Prudhomme, Levertin's reaction was lively, sarcastic, and effective. The jury's selection reminded him of the fairy tale of the child who, given her choice of jewels, picked the glass bead! It was inconceivable to Levertin that the prize should not have gone to Tolstoy, Ibsen, Björnson, or Zola. Such an award would indeed have been an act of life—what had happened was a mere ceremony, an exchange of courtesies between two academies.[20]

Levertin's opposition to "l'art pour l'art" was uncompromisingly expressed in an introduction to a novel by Geijerstam in 1901. He felt that form and content are inseparable. The concept of "l'art pour l'art" is "the feeling, heightened to meaninglessness, of the importance and worth of form, that art's form is holy, because without it there is no revelation—and every corruption, every relaxation in form-making becomes also a corruption and a slackness of thought."[21] Art is art only, he concluded, when form and content are in exact equilibrium.

In 1902 Levertin wrote an introduction to the Swedish translation of Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme*.[22] It is a short critical appreciation and a biography, intended to give the audience more understanding of what to expect on approaching a little-known author. Beyle, Levertin

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 193.
[19] Böök, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-204.
[20] Levertin, *För och mot*, pp. 219-225.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[22] Levertin, *Essayer*, II (Stockholm, 1907), in *Samlade skrifter*, XI, 73-91.

thought, had created his own legend in his letters and autobiographical sketches, and basked in the most arresting situations and in the advantageous lighting from the embers of Napoleon's hero saga. His intellectual life was entirely dominated by eighteenth-century sensual philosophy, which calmly, good-naturedly, denied all transcendentalism. His view of the world was that of a reasoner for whom the thirst for spiritual immortality was a mere phrase (and Beyle hated phrases) or empty illogicality. All physical and scientific phenomena could be explained. However, Beyle also, and basically, worshipped the individual and joined in the romantic cult of the value of personality. This made him something of a spiritual centaur and increased the contradictions and inconsequential paradoxes of his work.

La Chartreuse de Parme, Levertin went on to say, is not of the stature of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, but it is more appealing. Although, perhaps, no foreigner can truly describe another country, Beyle's nature responded so fully to Italy—in fact, one can say Italy made him a writer — that he gives a vivid impression of it and a brilliant psychological picture of Italians. Himself a dry and intellectual nature, he found fulfillment where culture and nature were not at war, in wildly flowering and nobly blossoming Italy, as Alfieri wrote—"the pleasure-garden where the human plant grew largest and most beautiful."

Levertin was especially interested because Beyle's dual nature—the Latin aspect as well as that of the foreigner in love with the foreign land—woke echoes of his own predicament. The critic's letters and particularly his poetry express his own passionate love for his native but alien country and his need to identify himself with it. And, as we have already seen, he felt in himself the conflict of romanticism and positivism.

In 1897 he reviewed in *Svenska Dagbladet* Zola's *Une Campagne* and, in 1901, *Travail*. In the collected volume, *Utländsk literatur*,[23] these two reviews are followed by a tribute, written in 1902, to Zola, recently dead. Not surprisingly, the reviews devote considerable attention to Zola's defects as Levertin then saw them. In *Une Campagne*, he says, Zola shows himself a powerful optimist, believing in the senses, and having for his entire metaphysic only the deification of force. He has become unwilling to trouble to learn anything new—and displays moreover a regrettable lack of modesty in pushing his own works. *Travail* begins with masterly chapters, vivid descriptions, but lacks measure, tact, taste, and comic sense, and indulges in a booming fortissimo of monotonous rhetoric. Zola is still, however, a master in dealing with ensemble scenes and in erotic passages. The book's greatest

[23] Levertin, *Utländsk litteratur* (Stockholm, 1909), in *Samlade skrifter*, XVI, 5-25.

defect is its anticlimactic Utopian ending, heavily sentimental and unconvincing even to the reader convinced of the reality of the wrongs and abuses set forth in the book. The same concern for humanity, the increased moral authority felt in Zola was equalled, among living writers, by Tolstoy alone. Zola's greatness rests in his apostolic warmth and in his faith in truth and the future.

The tribute written after Zola's death praises him as a fighter who won all his fights—that for Manet, for instance—except only the last, that for Dreyfus. One could wish him a longer life only that he might have seen the future triumph of truth in his country. His literary fame cannot increase; and a growing lack of concentration and grave new defects stamp his latest work. Actually, *Les Rougon-Macquart* will become his life's monument, and he can sleep peacefully for centuries under it. Even if his books are not studied in the future, his name will last because of his bold attempt to make poetry out of modern existence in its entirety, in its most typical forms and aspects, with exactly the distinguishing characteristics of a period which seemed to Levertin to be scientific, socialistic, belonging to the masses, and marked by class warfare.

> As the divine smith who hammered his art out on the flaming forge of modern existence, Zola stands for me a heavy but great figure and his short name will long sound above the noise of railway trains and propellers, above the crashing in shops and factories, and in time with the tread of dark masses which in closed ranks make their solemn advance on the world's arena.[24]

Sympathetic and eloquent as is Levertin's treatment of Stendhal and Zola, he seems to feel more kinship with Flaubert, whose stature, as we have seen, he early recognized. In 1903, he wrote a lengthy review of a Norwegian book on the novelist, which he considered chiefly valuable as a well-selected compendium of critical opinion and as a work on a subject unusual for contemporary Scandinavia. The review turns into a consideration of all the works of Flaubert and his place in French literature.[25]

Levertin wrote that *Madame Bovary* is the original text, the archetype, of modern realism and, apart from its literary-historical importance, one of the most complete and consistent realistic writings in the world's literature. *Salammbô* is the most masterly of all modern novels of the antique, containing as it does a whole epoch's love of the exotic, lust for the dazzling and showy, longing for the ecstasy of the blood, the intoxication of the senses—it is like one of those majestic pyres on which the kings of sagas are burned, surrounded by their treasure, women, jew-

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

[25] Levertin, *Nordisk litteratur* (Stockholm, 1909), in *Samlade skrifter*, XV, 106-114.

elry, weapons, hangings—all reduced to red fire and red embers. *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* is Flaubert's *Götterdämmerung*, the great fool's parade of all humanity's fallen and deposed gods which Flaubert shows, dragging itself before the fever-giddy eyes of the anchorite in the desert. This book is the most Flaubertian of all, with its romantic purple sheen of style, with the extreme gaiety and extreme gloom of the feast, with the music of intoxication and pining. Man is an unconscious liar, a voluntary creator of illusions, worshipping gods made after his own image, grotesquely fathering his own fears and lusts. The book is a world history, a religious history, full of contemptuous bitterness.

Levertin goes on to say that, with the years, the impression of Flaubert's greatness has grown. The greater the perspective upon the last great current—realism, naturalism, what you will—the greater stature Flaubert gains, both as the first great conscious realistic writer and as the classic in both artistic expression and intellectual control. To call Flaubert the last romantic and first realist is a half-true simplification. Before him, French romanticism was already thoroughly changed by the incessant transformation inherent in all writing. Balzac's intoxication with reality, Stendhal's scientific psychology and return to eighteenth-century materialism, George Sand's socialistic enthusiasm, Hugo's democratic idealism and philanthropy—what were all these but new elements exactly opposite to the nature of romanticism and basically transforming its spirit? Flaubert, the doctor's son, united with romantic writing the power of modern science, which was the strongest and most important power of the future. This combination of the two deepest intellectual currents of the nineteenth century made Flaubert great and influential. A whole life's struggle and meditation, the firm and contemplative calm of a thinker, went into this exceptional union.

Levertin adds that French criticism had not sufficiently stressed the greatness of Flaubert's world view, but had rather pointed to his contradictions and lack of consistency. Flaubert was an improviser in talk, and in his letters there is much that is fanciful and paradoxical. But his carefully considered thoughts, the fruit of solitary reflection, make him actually the most consistent of writers. To be sure, he had many tastes which appear contradictory—he loved the Orient and Greece, both the antique and the Gothic, the poetry of barbarism and of the highest civilization. This, Levertin feels, is the modern historian's all-embracing love and one of the time's most fundamental characteristics. Those who can really read receive from his work a deep impression of unity. One finds throughout his letters the same fantastic cult of art which made him the most humble, furious, and tenacious worshipper of beauty of form in French prose, and which made him consider the universe first and foremost as the artist's battlefield and hunting ground. His ro-

mantic worship of art is saved from personal whim by his theory of objectivity, which insists that the artist shall disappear behind the work, as the creator back of the creation, and that his writings shall have the neutrality of natural objects—a mountain, a mighty tree, or a large animal. Flaubert loved equally the sensational, the full-bodied and colorful, and the precisely observed, the demonstrable. His interest in the stupid and monstrous in humanity, man's spiritual sicknesses, is the physician's interest in abnormality's instructiveness. He was many-sided, unusual but logical—if one remembers that he was the descendant of romanticism, born in a hospital building, the son of a highly "positive" doctor, and that he was, in Levertin's opinion, by attitude of mind and physique entirely cut off from personal participation in life.

In 1906 Levertin had occasion again to write on Flaubert in a review of the letters of Flaubert and his niece Caroline.[26] He first draws back from what seems an insensitive and callous exposure of intimate details of a great man's private life. But he is reassured by the knowledge that we must have all the truth about Flaubert, even about his simple human goodness in everyday living. The letters give an impression of imaginative playfulness, of an almost German *Gemüt*, surprising in a strict Latin stylist, and help us also to understand more clearly why the spirit of the Seine's peaceful curving through his homeland, of Poussin's landscapes, is felt in his peaceful, monumental prose works. Our time, Levertin thinks, probably places too much importance on the direct and incomplete—the sketches, the trembling of hands. But Flaubert, in his novels, restlessly polishes and loses the impression of freshness. When he chews a phrase for days, whispers and bellows it, kneads and turns it, it certainly becomes rock-firm and imperishable, but can also seem petrified. It once was, one may think, a flower which trembled and smelled—now it is turned to stone. Although Flaubert went to prodigious lengths for exact information on details of fact, Levertin feels that this should not be interpreted as indicating lack of imagination. There is ample evidence of imagination in the visionary unity of Flaubert's work and in such occurrences as his sympathetic vomiting while writing Madame Bovary's death scene. However, in this demand for realistic certitude lies naturalism's fatal artistic principle—the belief that reality is the keystone of poetry. Great, brilliant, warm-blooded creators of life like Balzac did not have this uneasiness about their work's veracity. They instinctively believed in their creative imagination as the spindle believes in its skill in spinning. Unfrightened and without hesitation, they have, as creators, competed with the Lord.

The union of two inexorable demands made writing for Flaubert the most burdensome and anxious of tasks. As he aged, this became

[26] Levertin, *Essayer*, II, 119-139.

more noticeable. There is something perverse about *Bouvard et Péchuchet*, the aim of which is to present an encyclopaedia of human stupidity. But, as usual with Flaubert, his excesses and his originality are related. His remarkable respect for his craft, his serfdom in the service of art, have produced some of the most powerful, most solid and beautiful writing in modern literature. The conversation between the sphinx and the chimaera in *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* is comparable in grandeur to Goethe's *Faust*. In *Trois Contes*, we have impeccable infallibility of form, the firm placing of rich and condensed content, profound intellectual consciousness. In "La Légende de Saint Julien l'hospitalier," we have the dream world of three centuries, all the piety of the Middle Ages—in "Hérodias" the Oriental sun and blood poetry, the spirit of a whole continent. "Un Cœur simple" presents the archetype of the faithful servant. Flaubert's work embraces all civilizations and to a heightened degree reveals modern man's desire to shift his viewpoint. His writing is an illumination of life which reveals something split but, precisely in its variations, incomparably gripping and great. Clearly, he is the strongest figure in French belles-lettres since Hugo and Balzac.

Levertin, always an eager student of literary developments, was well aware of the growth of the Symbolist movement in France. In his article, "At the Turn of the Century," in *Svenska Dagbladet* in 1900, he casts a backward glance at the whole nineteenth century, and still further, at its roots in the past. Turning toward the present, he has this to say of symbols:

> A symbol is an emblem [Sinnbild] of something deep and important, giving in tangible form something of humanity's eternally existing virtues, something of its never slackening ideal. Philosophy is the root of all symbolism and the shaping of new symbols is an expression in art of the same emancipation which the concepts of unity and development give us in science. And this century, which devoted its first half's inspiration to humanity, the ego, the individual and history, and its last to nature, the masses, and factual knowledge, closes thus in greater harmony than the superficial observer believes when as its last gift it offers life-explaining science and life-revealing symbol.[27]

Levertin wrote sympathetically and understandingly of Rimbaud in 1900 and, in 1903, with less excitement, of Baudelaire. With Mallarmé (in 1898) he could not successfully maintain his critical objectivity, so cold, futile, and sterile did the Frenchman's poetry seem to him. He was equally subjective in his overpraise of the Comtesse de Noailles, whose personality and biography fascinated him.[28] It must be admitted that his predominantly romantic temperament occasionally betrayed him into making such errors of critical judgment.

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[27] Levertin, *För och mot*, p. 272.
[28] Levertin, *Essayer*, II, 140-165, 194-216.

Levertin's criticism is important and influential in Swedish literary history. In 1910 Carl G. Laurin said that Levertin's daily critical contribution to *Svenska Dagbladet* was a cultural force of priceless worth. A country in Sweden's situation must have constant intellectual connections with the great foreign cultures. These connections are difficult to maintain, and in Levertin's day the old ones with France were weakening. Less French was taught, there was less first-hand information about French literature, thought, and feeling. Levertin attained every year a deeper understanding of Swedish culture and spirit and loved Sweden with an exceptional inwardness, but he also had always loved French culture, from Pascal's piety to Anatole France's sensualism. He had, further, deep admiration for the aesthetic, a sense of justice, and a humble love of truth, the moral backbone of the scientist. For this reason he always said what he thought and took infinite pains to understand the new, to read as much as possible about everything.[29]

In his two-volume study of Levertin, Werner Söderhjelm also calls attention to his critical conscientiousness.[30] His criticism in *Svenska Dagbladet* had the creative artist's warm feeling for his art and its creators. The form he achieved in Swedish journalism had an unprecedented brilliance which gained him listeners and stimulated reflection.[31] Brandes had introduced Zola to the North, and Levertin had spread more widely the knowledge of French culture. He had increased his countrymen's interest in France's contemporary literature,[32] and had tried to knit again French tradition to Swedish cultural life.[33]

In Schück and Warburg's standard history of Swedish literature, Levertin's criticism is described as one of the big cultural achievements of the 1890s. Through him criticism became for the first time a self-sufficient literary form in Sweden.[34]

Frederik Böök, one of Levertin's students, says that his master's literary essays in *Svenska Dagbladet*, including even his most ephemeral book notices, were formed with an art and an imagination which had never been seen before. The gray newspaper columns, Böök maintains, shone like a mediaeval manuscript of purple and gold. Attention was aroused, fascinated, warmed, and gripped; Oscar Levertin awoke and nourished, as no one else could, the lively aesthetic interest which sprang up in Sweden at the turn of the century and to a large extent

[29] Carl G. Laurin, "Oscar Levertin som litteraturkritiker," *Ord och bild* (1910), pp. 189 ff.
[30] Söderhjelm, *op. cit.*, II, 191.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 311.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 377.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 487.
[34] H. Schück and K. Warburg, *Illustrerad svensk litteratur historia* (Stockholm, 1932), VII, 171.

placed his stamp on his country's intellectual life.[35] This opinion of Levertin's importance and success is also strongly stated by Strömberg and by Werner Söderhjelm in his definitive volumes on Levertin.[36]

Swedish intellectual life, Söderhjelm says, has always been sensitive to the winds of humanistic culture in Europe and perhaps just because of that its level has always been high. Levertin's work was closely bound up with tradition.[37] He wanted to create a general background that would enable Sweden to partake of Europe's best. He longed to bring humanistic culture and general taste to such a high state of development that his small country would attain an honored cultural rank. Levertin was one of the greatest Swedish interpreters and disseminators of culture.[38]

What he himself would have wanted as a tribute may be guessed from his own words, spoken near the last year of his life, at the fiftieth birthday celebration of his teacher, Henrik Schück:

> The will to impartiality and justice—so long as sight and constitution permit us to distinguish them—remains the requirement, the scientist's noblesse oblige. While passions murmur round about, with shrill prejudice, one longs for a calmer and clearer atmosphere in the world of science... How many different human beings from different periods and different communities and classes and with different opinions [Schück] has described in his books!... All thanks to the scientific principle that all human writing is written with so-called sympathetic ink. One can only rightly read and understand the letters and spirit of it when one holds it to the light. And the light is the light of human love.[39]

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[35] Böök, *op cit.*, pp. 192-193.

[36] Kjell Strömberg, *Modern svensk litteratur* (Stockholm, 1932), p. 33; Söderhjelm, *op. cit.*, II, 497.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 498.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 499.

[39] Levertin, *För och mot*, pp. 11-12.

STEFAN GEORGE ET LE SYMBOLISME FRANÇAIS

CURT VON FABER DU FAUR

LE JEUNE Stefan George fut profondément impressionné par la vie de Paris quand il visita la ville pour la première fois en 1889. Lui, qui évitait soigneusement tout cliché, l'appela "der heitren Anmut Stadt," "la ville du charme gracieux." Le symbolisme était alors dans toute sa jeune ferveur ; pour l'adolescent de la Rhénanie il représentait la poésie élevée et puissante, et même en quelque sorte la poésie absolue. Cet art n'avait point recours aux décorations poussiéreuses dont l'école de Munich avait orné ses vers et qui avaient si peu de rapports avec la vie moderne. George trouvait dans le symbolisme une flamme vivante qui s'était éteinte depuis quelque temps en Allemagne. Plus tard il n'admit dans son Parnasse que deux poètes contemporains de langue allemande : Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, dont les vers harmonieux, lucides et équilibrés étaient faits pour le séduire, et Friedrich Nietzsche, maître d'une prose glorieuse et poète à ses heures. George a toujours été sévère dans son exclusivisme et prêt à condamner ce qui ne se pliait point aux lois qu'il sentait être justes. Il n'admit jamais Wagner parmi ses dieux, et par là il se séparait de ses amis de France qui tous étaient admirateurs fervents du compositeur ; Baudelaire avait donné le ton, Verlaine, Mallarmé et bien d'autres saluaient le maître de Bayreuth.

Le cercle dans lequel il fut admis était, comme l'a caractérisé Albert Mockel aprés la mort de Mallarmé, "l'élite d'une élite." L'action décisive que Mallarmé se proposait, c'était "de présenter, intacte et totale, la vivante figure du *Poète* aux dédaigneux de poésie, et l'image de l'Absolue Beauté à une époque sans gloire." Déjà les sous-titres que Mockel donnait à ses biographies de Mallarmé et d'Emile Verhaeren, "un héros" et "un poète de l'énergie," montrent un esprit qui devait attirer Stefan George.

Car l'héroïsme et l'énergie poétique étaient bien l'idéal qui dorénavant allait attirer les efforts du jeune Allemand. Les poètes français, qu'on avait considérés non seulement comme décadents mais comme dégénérés et qui, relevant le gant, s'en étaient vantés, apparurent quelques années plus tard sous une lumière tout autre. C'étaient des pionniers qui avaient eu le courage d'explorer des régions encore inconnues de l'âme, de la langue et du vers. George a non seulement rendu hommage à Mallarmé et à Verlaine dans deux articles publiés d'abord dans ses *Blätter für die Kunst* et plus tard dans sa collection de pièces en prose *Tage und Taten*, mais il a aussi honoré la France dans un poème intitulé

"Franken." C'est le septième des quatorze odes majestueuses qui ouvrent en 1907 le plus monumental de ses livres, *Der Siebente Ring*. La France, dit le poète, ayant atteint la souveraineté dans les arts après sa défaite militaire, avait, elle, conquis un empire spirituel. A Paris George trouva l'aliment terrestre dont il avait rêvé, et un air vivifiant, alors le seul pour lui respirable.

Le poème n'est pas long, il se compose de quatre stances de huit vers; mais George l'a chargé d'une grave pesanteur en l'encadrant de réminiscences de la *Divine Comédie*:

> Es war am schlimmsten Kreuzweg meiner Fahrt:
> Dort aus dem Abgrund züngelnd giftige Flammen,
> Hier die gemiednen Gaue...

Et c'est à la *Chanson de Roland* qu'il emprunte le vers qui clora son poème:

> Returnent Franc en France dulce terre

L'idée de retourner en France et de devenir poète français l'avait hanté, réconforté pendant les années d'incertitude et de lutte qui suivirent son séjour à Paris.

Il offre dans ce *Siebenter Ring* ses hommages aux trois héros, gardiens à son avis des secrets de la poésie, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Verlaine et Mallarmé. Ils incarnent le héros, l'humble et le martyr. Villiers se croyait le rejeton d'une très ancienne famille qui pouvait aspirer à un trône. Le grand style altier d'*Axël*, sans doute trop calculé et entaché d'artifice dans les amples replis de sa draperie, agréait certainement au goût du jeune poète allemand, et son *Algabal* s'est peut-être ressenti de cet étrange roman. Dix ans plus tard il en aperçut les faiblesses. En Verlaine il voit le catholique pieux et enfantin d'après la conversion. Et certes, le texte de la conférence que Verlaine prononça à Londres en 1894 donne une impression de naïveté et de bonhomie. Mais c'est pour Mallarmé que George réserva son plus bel éloge: il l'appele un "martyr qui souffrit pour sa vision,"

> Und für sein Denkbild blutend: Mallarmé.

Le style du poème est lourd, surchargé de métaphores et d'images difficiles. Mais le poète évite un langage trop intellectuel. Chacune des quatres strophes commence par une situation différente, selon le procédé dit paratactique, et forme un tout indépendant. La première décrit l'isolement du poète, la seconde l'appel sorti de la bouche d'une fée qui le fait venir en France, terre magnanime, mère des étrangers méconnus et chassés. La nature s'offre à lui par un murmure du vent qui agite les feuillages dans les vallées de la Meuse et de la Marne. La troisième dépeint ce que Paris pouvait lui offrir: l'amitié d'une jeunesse littéraire, ivre de tous les espoirs chers aussi à George. La dernière nous montre le poète rentré dans sa "patrie morne" et s'alimentant de tout ce qui lui

reste des nourritures que la France lui avait offertes. Il y a dans ce poème presque un transport de gratitude que l'écart de vingt ans n'a point atténué.

L'Allemagne est traitée avec dureté et désignée comme "les régions évitées où le dégoût me prit de tout ce qu'on honorait et entreprenait." Cela changea plus tard quand il reconnut que son pays offrait encore bien des promesses. Déjà lorsqu'il publia ce poème, sa rencontre avec la nouvelle génération et un changement d'attitude en lui avaient modifié *Der Siebente Ring*. Les *Zeitgedichte* au commencement du livre montraient donc la situation passée du poète; le centre du *Siebenter Ring* l'histoire du changement; la fin passe à une évaluation beaucoup plus positive de son entourage allemand.

Son dégoût originel date du temps de sa première jeunesse où les deux écoles littéraires alors en vogue lui étaient tellement antipathiques. C'était, d'une part, l'école idéaliste dite de Munich, représentée surtout par Geibel et Heyse et, d'autre part, le mouvement naturaliste, qui était jeune encore, vigoureux et frais et qui avait remporté déjà quelques succès marqués à la scène. Le premier ignorait le monde moderne, on se contentait de le parer d'ornements classiques ou gothiques. Le mouvement naturaliste que George attaqua avec tant de sévérité témoignait de la tendance révolutionnaire de montrer la *vérité* au lieu de la *beauté*, laquelle était traitée avec suspicion.

Dans sa volonté de vérité outrancière, le naturalisme s'était précipité à l'extrémité qui consiste à éclairer seulement les abîmes et les ordures, et à déclarer comme le plus vrai ce qui est le plus bas. Il y avait un mélange un peu répugnant d'idées humanitaires avec des accumulations de saletés et de situations grossières, étalées pour des intellectuels morbides et avides de sensations nouvelles, pour le public des premières et des vernissages. Il y avait une sociologie qui n'avait jamais le courage de tirer les dernières conséquences de ce qu'elle prêchait, une psychologie qui ne décrivait que des idiots, des ivrognes, des prostituées et des pervers, et qui prétendait que c'était là la race humaine. Certes, ces êtres avaient plus de réalité que les belles ombres des Epigones. Mais les deux écoles manquaient de profondeur, de métaphysique véritable et de vision; leur langage en fournit la preuve; il est usé et commun et devenait terriblement banal dès qu'on voulait le mettre en vers.

Arno Holz, un des théoriciens du mouvement, a écrit: "L'art a la tendance de redevenir la nature: il le redevient en proportion de la qualité des instruments de reproduction employés, et de l'habileté mise à leur maniement." Ce n'est pas trop clair sans doute, mais en allemand c'est pire encore: "Die Kunst hat die Tendenz wieder [de nouveau] die Natur zu sein. Sie wird sie nach Maßgabe ihrer jeweiligen Reproduktionsbedingungen und deren Handhabung." Evidemment le style de la

prose n'y a pas gagné. Il est clair qu'un matérialisme tellement borné ne pouvait pas produire un art vraiment élevé.

C'est donc la forme que le jeune George était allé chercher à Paris. La manière française de se plier aux règles établies du vers, même quand on avait du nouveau à dire, lui donnait une impression d'équilibre et d'harmonie. Il y admirait cette beauté impassible à laquelle Baudelaire avait fait dire: "Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes." C'est la beauté qu'il poursuivait avant tout. Il n'avait jamais souffert de la difficulté de réconcilier l'art et la vérité, ou l'artifice et la vie. Il ne les avait jamais trouvés incompatibles. Immédiatement après avoir quitté la France, il traversa une longue période où sa poésie devint foncièrement artificielle, mais il savait qu'elle recélait aussi des vérités profondes.

Cependant, une fois mûri, il dut retrouver des moyens d'expression plus simples. "Le goût immodéré de la forme, avait dit Baudelaire, pousse à des désordres monstrueux et inconnus . . . les notions du vrai et du juste disparaissent."

Et il y a un autre danger, celui d'une certaine stérilité qui est la condition dépeinte dans l'*Hérodiade* de Mallarmé et dans l'*Algabal* de George. De tous les Français, Mallarmé était celui dont il se sentait le plus proche; mais il se savait bien différent aussi et ne s'aveuglait pas sur les faiblesses de l'homme qu'il vénérait. "Mallarmé, a-t-il dit plus tard, est devenu célèbre à force de ne rien faire."

Quand George arriva à Paris il avait déjà traduit quelques poèmes de Baudelaire. Et il se mit pendant les années suivantes à rendre *Les Fleurs du mal* dans leur totalité. C'était un travail courageux, qu'il entreprit pour ses compatriotes, comparable à ce qu'avait fait August Wilhelm Schlegel pour Shakespeare. Rien n'est aussi difficile à traduire que la poésie lyrique, comme l'a bien prouvé le *Permanent Goethe* que Thomas Mann publia en 1949. La poésie traduite ne peut jamais être la poésie vraie. Il y a toujours la différence entre le "vers donné" et le "vers calculé," dont parle Mr. Bowra dans son *Inspiration and Poetry* de 1951, entre le vers chargé d'une force inouïe et étrange et celui qui n'est que bien fait.

Mais comme Schlegel avec son langage bourgeois et romantique a changé le langage de la Renaissance qu'avait écrit Shakespeare, George a décidément changé le langage de Baudelaire. Il l'a ennobli, hélas! L'ennui, par exemple, le terrible ennui, qui suffoquait le Français, est travesti en "Leiden" ou "Schmerz," sensations plutôt nobles; pas une seule fois il ne le rend dans son sens propre. Et les omissions sont graves! Le premier poème manque, le célèbre "Au Lecteur." Immédiatement on est pris d'un soupçon. George n'avait pas l'intention de rendre Baudelaire intégralement. Il ne se sentait pas "hypocrite lecteur." Il aurait dû admettre que le poète qui dans un bâillement gargantuesque voudrait avaler le monde par Ennui (écrit avec une majuscule), n'accusait pas

les "Schmerzen" ou les "Leiden"; il souffrait de la "Langeweile" monstrueuse, vorace, pareille à la louve de Dante, s'unissant à toutes les autres horreurs qui hantent l'humanité.

George sentit qu'une explication était nécessaire. Il assura dans une introduction que cette "Verdeutschung" des *Fleurs du mal* ne voulait pas présenter un écrivain étranger, mais était purement un produit de sa passion pour la forme. Il devait donc finir sa traduction au moment où "il avait épuisé les possibilités poétiques." La phrase est quelque peu équivoque. Mais la suivante est plus claire:

> Il ne reste plus de doute aujourd'hui que ce ne sont point les images repoussantes et écœurantes par lesquelles le maître a été séduit un moment qui lui ont apporté la grande vénération de toute la nouvelle génération, mais l'assiduité avec laquelle il conquit de nouveaux territoires pour la poésie et la flamme spirituelle qui purifiait les thèmes les plus osées.

Cela, c'est Baudelaire bien compris, si l'on excepte le mot "un moment." Les images repoussantes et écœurantes l'ont toujours hanté, c'est en elles que repose l'horreur et la gloire de son style.

George de son côté ne voulait pas créer une traduction, il voulait ériger un monument allemand au poète. Mais on sent bien qu'il n'y avait pas seulement la question de la forme qui attirait George vers Baudelaire. N'y avait-il pas un lien secret qui les unissait? Une condition spéciale? Peut-être était-ce cette bataille continuelle pour la réalisation d'un amour qui ne pouvait se réaliser. Cette distance entre les orgies de la fantaisie et la chasteté involontaire ou nécessaire imposée par la nature. Baudelaire, grand aigle encagé, donnait, dès qu'il quittait sa cage, l'impression d'un poulet mal assis; George sut toujours qu'il ne fallait jamais la quitter.

Mais pour le futur réformateur de la poésie allemande, l'attraction principale des *Fleurs du mal* était sans doute la structure vigoureuse de ces vers. Baudelaire avait affirmé qu'il était difficile "d'extraire la beauté du mal." Cela, certainement, devait plaire à George, dont les vers sont bourrés d'obstacles et qui tenait en grand mépris Schiller et Heine avec leurs strophes trop lisses. Puis il avait ses idées à lui sur la vertu et le mal. Il savait bien ce qu'il peut y avoir de violence et de méchanceté dans le caractère de la bête humaine, et il n'avait pas l'intention de le supprimer dans son œuvre. Chez Baudelaire il trouva cette sincérité à laquelle l'oreille est aujourd'hui beaucoup plus sensible qu'auparavant. Aux symbolistes, comme au jeune George, une atmosphère maladive semblait plus réelle qu'une santé peu intéressante et souvent feinte. Dans sa dédicace à Théophile Gautier, Baudelaire avait appelé son livre "ces fleurs maladives." Ce côté-là ne se ressentait pas de la décadence.

Ce n'était donc pas le mal qui était repoussant pour George, c'était ce qu'il considérait comme faiblesse et saleté. Il n'eut pas beaucoup

d'indulgence pour la faiblesse et ne l'a jamais tolérée dans son cercle. Dans *Tage und Taten,* son livre d'essais en prose, nous trouvons quelques phrases qui révèlent son jugement sur les imitateurs des *Fleurs du mal,* cinq ans après son séjour à Paris:

> Le mot de Nietzsche: "Ecris avec ton sang!" est mal compris par beaucoup d'écrivains. Ils croient que cela veut dire: montre sans te gêner les cicatrices de tes blessures et les palpitations de ta sensualité afin qu'on te prenne pour sincère. Mais ce n'est pas cela que nous voulons y voir, car l'art, ce n'est ni la douleur ni la jouissance, c'est le triomphe sur l'une et la sublimation de l'autre.

Telle est la raison qui lui a fait supprimer tant de poèmes importants des *Fleurs du mal:* "Le Serpent qui danse," "Une Charogne," "Le Vampire," "L'affreuse Juive," "Le Possédé," "Confession," "Le Flacon," "Le Poison," "L'Irréparable," "Le Goût du néant," "Fontaine de sang," "Un Voyage à Cythère," "La Béatrice," "Litanies de Satan," "Le Squelette laboureur," "Les sept vieillards," "Danse macabre," "A une mendiante rousse," "L'Amour du mensonge," "Rêve parisien," "Le Vin de l'assassin," "Une Martyre," et quelques autres. Ce sont les pièces où le culte du macabre, du bizarre, du malsain, de l'horreur est poussé jusqu'à la limite où l'imagination est saisie de terreur. Dans "Un Voyage à Cythère," par exemple, les vers:

> Ah! Seigneur! donnez-moi la force et le courage,
> De contempler mon cœur et mon corps sans dégoût!

Ces vers ont dû fortement répugner à George, qui cherchait au contraire à diviniser le corps à l'instar des Grecs. Il a rendu de Baudelaire ce qui était subtil et fort, sans reculer même devant l'étrange ou l'épouvantable. Mais dans les passages où la dignite humaine lui semblait attaquée, il refuse de suivre Baudelaire, et lui tourne le dos avec un dégoût marqué, comme le prouve le ton assez peiné de son introduction. Peut-être ne comprenait-il pas tout à fait la situation du malheureux Français qui se sentait la créature d'un Dieu qui n'avait pas même besoin d'exister pour régner. Baudelaire se croyait lancé par ce Dieu incompréhensible et plutôt cruel dans un monde que l'homme ne pouvait dominer, avec son corps plein de désirs indomptables et juste assez de jugement pour comprendre, mais point assez pour modifier son sort! Il chancelait éternellement entre la terreur et l'ennui. Baudelaire n'a jamais renié Dieu, il l'a insulté, il a raillé le Christ dans son "Reniement de Saint Pierre." George, lui, ne l'a pas blasphémé, mais il était bien loin du Dieu de son Église. Sa notion d'un monde rempli de matières et d'essences divines, qui pouvaient prendre forme et se manifester si les conditions que leur préparait la race humaine leur étaient favorables, avaient une origine bien différente, inconnue à Baudelaire: les hymnes de Hölderlin. Avec ces dieux futurs, George se sentait en harmonie. Il se caractérisait lui-même ainsi: j'ai peu de plaintes et peu de haine

contre mon sort, mais je nourris de longues idées de vengeance contre mes ennemis.

Il était fier, et même dans ses moments de dépression il n'avait nulle envie de hurler "De profundis." Ce qui l'unit à Baudelaire c'est la haute idée qu'ils ont tous les deux du poète, envisagé comme créateur et visionnaire mystique, *vates* sacré, prophète. Par là George perpétue un idéal parnassien et baudelairien dont Mallarmé en France avait hérité.

George n'a pas choisi l'alexandrin pour sa traduction. Il a préféré le mètre iambique, rimé, à cinq pieds, mètre plus naturel en allemand avec son accentuation prononcée. D'où un désavantage: le vers plus spacieux de Baudelaire avait deux syllabes de plus qui manquent quelquefois à son traducteur pour rendre des termes essentiels; tel est le cas, dans "La Géante," pour l'adjectif si baudelairien "voluptueux":

J'eusse aimé vivre auprès d'une jeune géante,
Comme aux pieds d'une reine un chat voluptueux.

Bei einer jungen Riesin leben wollen
Wie eine Katze auf der Fürstin Schoß.

Un chat tout seul devient une créature bien innocente; si le qualificatif décisif manque, on est tenté de se dire: "laisse-le donc ronronner!"

Presque toujours dans une traduction, des mots et des phrases banales ou trop ornées se glissent dans le texte. Souvent même la maîtrise de George n'a pas pu surmonter l'obstacle.

Montant comme la mer sur le roc noir et nu

devient:

Es gleicht auf nacktem Fels dem Wogenschwall...

et dans "L'Albatros" il rend le vers:

Lui naguère si beau, qu'il est comique et laid!

Der Lüfte König duldet Spott und Schmach,

ce qui est tout à fait mutilé dans les deux cas. Et il y a pire: George n'a pas du tout compris le vers:

L'autre mime, en boitant, l'infirme qui volait.

Ein andrer ahmt den Flug des Armen nach...

Le sens est justement le contraire. La démarche boiteuse de l'oiseau géant fait contraste avec son vol magnifique. Il aurait fallu mettre ici "den Gang." Deux de ces malentendus sont encore à mettre en lumière, qui semblent avoir échappé jusqu'ici à l'attention. Dans "Le Cygne" l'animal languissant dans la poussière crie au ciel:

Eau, quand donc pleuvras-tu? quand tonneras-tu, foudre?

ce qui n'est pas du tout:

Wann triffst du mich, Blitz! Wann wirst du mich, Wolke, verschlingen!

Le cygne ne veut nullement être foudroyé par le tonnerre, et il ne saurait être noyé par un torrent de pluie. Dans "Les Aveugles":

> Contemple-les, mon âme; il sont vraiment affreux!
> Pareils aux mannequins; vaguement ridicules.
>
> Wie Puppen sind sie beinah lächerlich.

Ils ne sont pas *presque* ridicules. Un autre mot dans "Brumes et pluies" soulève des doutes: le poème est un chant solitaire: le poète ne s'adresse pas à une compagne, mais au climat. A la fin, pour triste compensation, il ne reste rien,

> Si ce n'est, par un soir sans lune, deux à deux,
> D'endormir la douleur sur un lit hasardeux.

"Hasardeux," ici, veut dire: "offert par hasard," mais non pas "dangereux" et

> Nur schläfern wir manchmal am mondlosen Abend zu Zwein
> Auf einem gewagten Bette die Schmerzen ein,

me semble ne pas rendre le tragique de cette morne solitude. Et dans "Que diras-tu ce soir, pauvre âme solitaire," George traduit les vers:

> Que ce soit dans la nuit et dans la solitude,
> Que ce soit dans la rue et dans la multitude,
> Son fantôme dans l'air danse comme un flambeau.

par:

> Sei es in der Nacht und in der Enge,
> Sei es in der Straße in der Menge,
> Sie verfolgt als Leuchte meine Spur

Le poète ne pourrait pas voir un fantôme qui suivrait son pas; il doit l'avoir devant ses yeux!

La traduction célèbre des *Fleurs du mal* soulève donc bien des réserves. Certes, il est naturel que dans une œuvre de cette étendue et de cette difficulté le traducteur ait subi quelques défaites. Dans l'ensemble, le poète allemand a réussi sa tâche. La richesse et l'originalité de Baudelaire sont entrées dans le texte allemand, aussi bien que sa cruauté, la somptuosité sombre de son langage, l'artificiel, le macabre, le bizarre, l'étrange, et même la tendresse du poète maudit, sa religion travestie et sa haine. Les réussites magnifiques abondent. Il y a même des cas où l'allemand semble plus précis et plus heureux que l'original. Dans le "Sonnet d'automne":

> Gift ist mir Leidenschaft und Geist mir Plage!

est plus suggestif que:

> Je hais la passion et l'esprit me fait mal!

Des vers:

> Son haleine fait la musique
> Comme sa voix fait le parfum...

il fait:

Verbreitet den Duft ihre Stimme,
Verbreitet ihr Atem den Ton.

Et puis il y a "Les Hiboux," petite fable dont il a su transposer tout le charme:

Die Eulen

Unter schützenden schwarzen Bäumen
Thronen die Eulen geschart
Wie Götter seltsamer Art
Mit feurigen Augen. Sie träumen . . .

Mais c'est aussi dans quelques-uns des grands poèmes héroïques et solennels que George a gagné une victoire définitive sur la langue. Un des meilleurs exemples de ce style est "Lesbos":

Mutter lateinischer Spiele und griechischer Wonnen,
Lesbos, wo Küsse bald freudig, bald schmachtend gelind
Frisch wie von reifen Pasteken und heiß wie die Sonnen
Zierde der ruhmvollen Tage und Nächte sind.
Mutter lateinischer Spiele und griechischer Wonnen!

Ici il a même réussi à sauver un mot rare comme "pastèques." Le fameux hymne à la beauté a gardé quelque chose de sa sorcellerie évocatoire:

Ob Gott oder Satan, ob Engel oder Sirene:—
Mach nur, sammtäugige Zauberin, daß nicht zu sehr
O Klang, Duft und Licht! O Herrin, die ich ersehne!
Die Erde mir häßlich ist und der Augenblick schwer!

Baudelaire, on le sait, affectionnait étrangement les parfums. Il y revient toujours, les désigne avec un raffinement précis. George l'imite fidèlement en cela, mais chez lui c'est un goût acquis et un peu forcé. Il ne conservera rien, plus tard, de cette atmosphère parfumée. Dans ses "Correspondances," Baudelaire avait formulé son credo sur la symbolique des parfums, répondant aux couleurs et aux sons. Le jeune George—le dandy à chapeau haut de forme—lui aussi avait cru devoir se servir de ces odeurs inusitées. A la fin des *Pilgerfahrten*, ne trouvant pas de violettes vivantes dans son jardin, il nous offre son mouchoir parfumé et son Algabal savoure dans son palais souterrain l'essence d'ambre, d'encens et de citron à la puissance magique.

Algabal, troisième livre du poète, est unique dans son œuvre. Un roman s'y déroule, la vie et la mort d'Héliogabale, empereur d'origine syrienne dégénéré et mystique qui vécut au commencement du troisième siècle. George en fait un caractère qui méprise le monde, qui se retire dans un vaste empire souterrain qu'il a créé, où tout est artificiel, la mer, les fruits, les arbres, le soleil et la lune, où tout reflète une splendeur inouïe. Le livre est divisé ent trois parties, dont la première, *Im*

Unterreich, est influencée de manière très prononcée par le "Rêve parisien" de Baudelaire. Le même silence, la même absence du "végétal irrégulier," la même surabondance de pierres luisantes, mais froides. Naturellement, il n'y a pas de taudis comme celui où se retrouve après son rêve le poète parisien ; l'idée d'*Algabal* est tout autre. La chose la plus étonnante est que le poète a conféré une telle réalité tangible à l'entourage de son héros. Il ne s'est pas contenté de généralités, mais les matières, les étoffes, les structures sont décrites dans tous leurs détails, évoquant ce mélange fantastique de cultes romain et oriental.

Le même enthousiasme pour une prodigalité de richesses et de rêveries fantasques emplissait l'*Axël* de Villiers, mais avec sacrifice complet du vraisemblable, dans les détails comme dans les situations. Et puis Axël semblait marcher dans la direction opposée. Algabal est chassé de sa retraite par sa situation élevée d'empereur, qui le force à quitter la vie de fantaisie pour la vie d'action. Axël nous est présenté comme un jeune homme idéal, actif, riche de tous les dons du corps et de l'esprit. Il avait d'abord connu la pauvreté et pratiqué une vertu sombre ; mais les richesses énormes qui lui sont offertes d'une manière inattendue l'asphyxient. Plus encore qu'à Axël ou qu'à Des Esseintes, c'est à Mallarmé que George semble avoir emprunté quelques traits de son héros, "raturant le vif" et "s'accrochant à toutes les croisées d'où on tourne l'épaule à la vie."

Un autre élément des *Fleurs du mal* qui a grandement influencé George, c'est l'architecture du volume. On sait combien Baudelaire y tenait. Il avait écrit à Alfred de Vigny : "Le seul éloge que je sollicite pour ce livre est qu'on reconnaisse qu'il n'est pas un pur album et qu'il a un commencement et une fin. Tous les poèmes nouveaux ont été faits pour être adaptés à un cadre singulier que j'avais choisi." Tous les livres de George sont aussi architecturés, mais la construction est beaucoup plus sévère que celle des *Fleurs du mal,* auxquelles l'auteur pouvait enlever et ajouter librement ce qu'il voulait. Chez George le nombre des poèmes est compté, les chapitres se contrebalancent, rien n'est laissé au hasard, excepté dans le dernier de ses livres, *Das Neue Reich,* une collection de différentes pièces que ne commande nul ordre intérieur.

Le profond intérêt de George pour le français, l'italien et l'anglais lui fit traiter son allemand comme une langue étrangère. Il le forgea à coups de marteau, lui donnant une force et une précision inconnues jusqu'alors. Ses poésies étaient comme taillées dans un matériel dur et résistant, d'où elles tiraient une beauté archaïque et sonore ; au commencement elles souffraient d'un manque de flexibilité. Son allemand avait perdu beaucoup des grâces que lui avait données Goethe et maints autres poètes. Plus tard il raffina sa diction en développant son sens

des nuances subtiles des couleurs et des sons. Sa diction devint plus riche, plus aisée. Mais il avait éliminé pour toujours les adjectifs faciles et parasites, ainsi que les verbes qui alourdissent le vers.

Stefan George a publié deux volumes de traductions de poètes modernes étrangers, *Zeitgenössische Dichter,* dont le second contient une vingtaine de poèmes de Verlaine, trois de Mallarmé, trois de Rimbaud et quatre de Henri de Régnier. Verlaine est donc à l'honneur. Vis-à-vis de lui cependant George est évidemment un peu embarrassé. Le côté "pauvre Lélian" lui était peu sympathique. Néanmoins il a trouvé sur son œuvre un mot qui le caractérise à merveille: "Ici, écrit-il dans *Tage und Taten,* nous entendîmes pour la première fois battre le cœur contemporain sans aucune rhétorique: nous savions dorénavant, que ni cothurne ni masques n'étaient nécessaires, et que la simple flute suffirait pour révéler aux hommes les plus profonds secrets." L'art de la simplicité, c'est chez Verlaine qu'il le trouve. D'ailleurs Verlaine est le poète moderne français le plus aimé et le mieux connu en Allemagne. Ses vers semblent si près du chant lyrique allemand, ses rythmes sont familiers et infiniment souples.

George a rendu "L'Heure du berger" et la "Chanson d'automne" des *Poèmes saturniens.* Il n'a pas suivi le mètre machinalement, mais il en reste assez proche pour produire la même sensation de musique monotone, d'accablement et de regret:

Im bösen Winde
Geh ich und finde
Keine Statt.
Treibe fort
Bald da bald dort
Ein welkes Blatt.

"Clair de lune" des *Fêtes galantes* est aussi fait avec un doigté extraordinaire, ainsi que "L'Allée" avec sa bergère séduisante et un peu stupide. Mais l'innocence sourde des "Ingénues" manque de légèreté et semble quelque peu pédante. "L'Amour par terre" est une pièce remarquable et le fameux "Colloque sentimental" ne pourrait être mieux rendu si le mot romantique de "Minne" au lieu des "extases" plus véridiques de Verlaine n'y faisait tache.

Im alten einsamen Park wo es fror
Traten eben zwei Schatten hervor.
Ihre Augen sind tot, ihre Lippen erblassen,
Kaum kann man ihre Worte fassen.
Im alten einsamen Park wo es fror
Rufen zwei Schatten das Ehmals hervor.—
Entsinnst du dich unsrer alten Minne?—
"Was willst du daß ich mich ihrer entsinne?"
Dein Herz klopft bei meinem Namen allein,
Siehst du mich noch immer im Traume?—"Nein."

Ach die Tage so schön, das Glück so unsäglich
Wo unsere Lippen sich trafen! "Wohl möglich."
Wie blau war der Himmel, die Hoffnung wie groß!
"Die Hoffnung entfloh in den finsteren Schoß."
Sie gingen dahin in den wirren Saaten,
Die Nacht nur hat ihre Worte erraten.

La réussite est presque complète.

C'est à Verlaine que George doit son sens de la musique, du mot, du son pur, ces mélodies qui ont influencé les *Lieder* du *Teppich des Lebens* et du *Siebenter Ring*. Parfois dans la traduction qu'a faite Maurice Boucher le ton de Verlaine semble reparaître pendant quelques lignes:

A ces fenêtres où naguère
Je rêvais le soir avec toi
Brillent des lampes étrangères...

Mais il y a toujours cette différence que la plasticité nette de George ne lui permet pas de suivre les tendresses brumeuses de Verlaine. Du poète vieillissant il n'a rien traduit, et c'était pourtant celui qu'il avait connu. De Rimbaud il n'a donné que "Les Voyelles" et deux autres poèmes dans le ton de Verlaine. Le "Bâteau ivre" manque; ce "canticus canticorum" du symbolisme lui a probablement semblé un peu désordonné. Le fait est qu'il nourrissait un ressentiment contre Rimbaud et Verlaine; il ne l'avoua que beaucoup plus tard, quand il dit à propos des *Notes sur ma vie*: "Leur signe est: la découverte de la cochonnerie pour la littérature." Et il ajouta en décembre 1925: "Les Français ont toujours tâché de dépasser les limites posées. C'est cela qui m'a déplu dès le commencement!" La différence devait être profonde entre lui, l'homme au masque qui ne montrait jamais au public son vrai visage, et Baudelaire, Verlaine et Rimbaud, qui tâchaient constamment d'ouvrir leur cœur, de le mettre à nu, de se scruter et de se confesser. On se demande s'il les a jamais vraiment acceptés. Il y a beaucoup plus du détachement des Parnassiens dans l'œuvre de George, spécialement de l'attitude de Heredia envers l'antiquité grecque et romaine.

Mais le poète qui par sa personnalité, par sa pensée et surtout par le niveau élevé de son art eut la plus profonde influence sur le néophyte qui se présenta à Paris, ce fut Mallarmé. Mallarmé qui avait donné cette attention si minutieuse à la mise en page de ses vers, qui avait compris que c'était principalement au lecteur, et non à l'auditeur, que s'adressait le livre moderne. George ne le suivit pas dans le sentier qui mena au *Coup de dés*, mais il fut bien un novateur et un révolutionnaire dans la forme extérieure qu'il donna à ses poèmes. Il inventa des caractères nouveaux qui, au début, déroutaient beaucoup de lecteurs, mais qui montraient des lignes fermes et fortes et donnaient au bloc imprimé d'un quatrain la même substance métallique qu'avaient ses vers. Mal-

larmé s'était occupé du décor et même de la reliure. *L'Après-midi d'un faune* avait paru avec un frontispice et des vignettes de Manet. George trouva en Melchior Lechter un artiste qui créa cet extérieur nouveau. Pour nous ces échantillons de l'art d'il y a soixante ans semblent souvent grotesques, mais l'exagération des débuts mena ensuite à des formes plus nobles.

Chez Mallarmé George trouva cette poésie pour initiés, obscure et absolument distincte de la langue profane, cet art de suggérer au lieu d'appuyer, cette préférence pour les paroles mystérieuses. Il en fut enchanté.

L'Après-midi d'un faune a laissé des traces dans les poèmes "Flurgottes Trauer" et "Zwiegespräch im Schilfe" de *Bücher der Hirten und Preisgedichte,* et dans "Der Mensch und der Drud" de *Das Neue Reich.* C'est un cousin du faune qui parle dans le premier, un de ces dieux rustiques et campagnards que connaissait la Grèce aussi bien que l'ancienne Rome. Il a fait la même rencontre que le faune de Mallarmé, mais il est bien sûr de sa vision. Il est rejeté pour sa laideur et se résigne tristement. Dans le deuxième poème il y a tout un dialogue entre un satyre et une nymphe qui ne se laisse pas émouvoir, même lorsqu'il fait mine de se suicider. C'est le désir du mâle laid et vigoureux opposé à la beauté froide, à laquelle le poète reconnaît des droits incontestables et souverains. La laideur n'a qu'à se soumettre.

"L'Homme et le droud" est d'un caractère très différent. Un mortel pénètre dans le domaine d'un satyre et se déclare révolté de rencontrer cette forme primitive, mi-humaine, monstrueuse. Mais le droud est sûr de sa vocation, il a sa fonction antique et éternelle, qui ne changera jamais. S'il est chassé définitivement des derniers recoins de la terre, tout tarira. C'est son devoir de faire ce qu'avait fait involontairement le jeune faune de Mallarmé : cultiver la terre et l'ensemencer. Le droud est le symbole de l'exubérance végétale.

Retournons au jeune George. Dans *Zeitgenössische Dichter* se trouve la traduction d'*Hérodiade* et de deux autres poèmes de Mallarmé. "Brise marine" est trop littérale et les alexandrins sans rimes de George sont irréguliers et difficiles. Celle d' "Apparition," est rimée, rendue avec une étonnante fraîcheur et en même temps une exactitude verbale qui ne peut être surpassée. Il se sert d'assonances et d'allitérations qui rendent le poème presque aussi musical que l'original français.

Dans la magnifique traduction d'*Hérodiade* il a rendu la langue de Mallarmé avec tout son fini, la somptuosité exigeante de ses mots rares, le difficile et l'artificiel qui savourent les dernières beautés poétiques. Une fois de plus George a sacrifié la rime. Mais il a réussi quand même à rendre quelque chose de la musique de la langue française :

Zurück!
Die blonde Flut, mein unbeflecktes Haar
Den Leib der Einsamen umbadend, macht
Ihn starr. Mein Haar vom Licht durchflochten ist
Unsterblich.

George a entièrement préservé le mystère stimulant de ces vers, cette beauté froide qui se manifeste dans l'obscurité, cette expression d'une orgie glacée, métallique et solitaire entre une femme et son miroir, cette culmination du narcissisme, qui surpasse les transes d'Algabal.

La stérilité est la condition naturelle d'Algabal comme d'Hérodiade. Mallarmé lui-même en avait été affecté, comme il écrit à un ami en 1965: "Cette œuvre solitaire m'avait stérilisé," et en 1866; "Je suis depuis un mois dans les plus purs glaciers de l'Esthétique." George a encore accentué la figure tragique de son empereur adolescent, majestueux et intouchable. Si Hérodiade est offensée par les trois mouvements de la nourrice qui pourraient la toucher, le moindre antagonisme contre Algabal est un péché mortel. Ces jeunes corps, froids à l'extérieur, chargés de pierreries, mais bouillants de désirs refoulés, sont proches l'un de l'autre. Plus encore qu'*Axël* et le "Rêve parisien," c'est *Hérodiade* qui a influencé l'idée et les détails d'*Algabal*.

Pour le lecteur allemand qui ne connaissait pas le texte français d'*Hérodiade*, ce que George offrait était presque incompréhensible. C'est probablement pour cette raison qu'il n'en fit imprimer d'abord que sept exemplaires. C'est seulement la partie en dialogue qu'il rend, sans l'"Ouverture" ni le "Cantique de Saint Jean."

Évidemment c'était le rythme et le son qui l'intéressaient, et puis naturellement cette vie dont l'amour va être la tentation la plus dangereuse. Toutes ces glaces, ces pierres, ces obscurités, qui protègent la virginité solitaire et pure, vont se dissoudre devant la passion de l'amour, qui va mener au meurtre Hérodiade aussi bien qu'Algabal.

Dans l'hommage qu'il rend à Mallarmé dans *Tage und Taten* George se livre sans réserve au charme du poète, à sa politesse enchanteresse, ses petits maniérismes britanniques, sa passion pour la cause du symbolisme. Mais il y a souvent des passages qui donnent à penser. Il se demande: "Le maître a-t-il passé sa vie dans une voie sans issue?" Il parle de la forte impression que les byzantins et latinistes du moyen-âge avaient faite sur lui par leur obscurité sonore. On a l'impression qu'il vénère le symbolisme de Mallarmé surtout à cause de son incompréhensibilité. Modestement il ajoute qu'il ne faut pas accuser le maître qui connaît les sources secrètes, si l'apprenti, qui l'a seulement observé par une fente de la porte, répète les saintes manipulations d'une manière maladroite. Mallarmé ne peut pas être imité.

Rentré de son séjour à Paris, George trouva bientôt son propre style.

Huit grands livres de poésies se succédèrent, récolte imposante d'une belle originalité. L'influence française s'évapora graduellement, sa manière individuelle de voir les choses, ses émotions personnelles trouvèrent leur expression. Il proclama un idéal nouveau, il se sentit prophète et ne se contenta plus simplement de chanter. Son symbolisme ne fut plus un moyen artistique, il servait un but didactique. Son *Stern des Bundes* (1914) est une collection de règles pour ses compagnons aussi bien qu'un livre de poésies.

Comme les symbolistes français il s'adressait à une élite, mais cette élite avait augmenté considérablement, elle était partout. George resta dans sa position mi-obscure, sans logis, toujours en route. Mais ses disciples avaient obtenu plusieurs chaires d'université importantes, son influence se faisait sentir dans la littérature contemporaine, et surtout les poètes l'avaient subie presque tous, même Hofmannsthal, même Rilke.

Depuis longtemps il avait quitté la préciosité et le culte de la décadence intéressante, il devint simple et naturel. Il abandonna complètement le décor exotique. Déjà en 1907, à quelques pages du poème "Franken," nous en trouvons un autre d'un ton et d'une tendance bien différentes, la "Tote Stadt." Les bijoux "de la valeur de larges territoires" offerts aux pauvres montagnards par les riches habitants des plaines, étouffant dans les miasmes de leur abondance, sont dédaigneusement précipités au bas des rochers par les talons nus des garçons des collines. Le symbole est très clair!

Dans les quinze dernières années de sa vie, la nostalgie pour la France se transforma en nostalgie pour le temps passé. Il était déçu par tous les peuples modernes. Il trouvait que l'Europe avait beaucoup perdu de ce qu'il appelait "la substance." Elle n'avait plus de force, elle ne pouvait se résoudre à rien. Il aimait à citer la fin d'un roman français qu'il trouvait caractéristique: "... et il continua sa pauvre vie." Il était devenu d'un pessimisme profond.

Mais après tout ce pessimisme il trouva une idée réconfortante dans la satire de Victor Hugo, *Napoléon le Petit*. Le poète y parle d'Erasme, de Bossuet et de Rousseau qui avaient tous attaqué la grande pourriture qu'était leur siècle. "Mais, poursuit Victor Hugo, la postérité a donné tort à ces esprits illustres. Elle a dit à Erasme: le seizième siècle était grand; elle a dit à Bossuet: le dix-septième siecle était grand; elle a dit à Rousseau: le dix-huitième siècle était grand." Il me semble que le dix-neuvieme siècle était grand aussi. Ne soyons pas trop durs pour le vingtième![1]

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[1] Bibliographie sommaire: Albert Mockel, *Propos de littérature* (Paris, 1894). Alexandre Urusof, "Le Tombeau de Baudelaire, précédé d'une étude sur les

Fleurs du Mal," *La Plume* (1896) (comprend des poésies d'hommage par Mallarmé, Stefan George, Pierre Louÿs, etc.). Maurice Muret, *La Littérature allemande d'aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1909). *Revue d'Allemagne* (nov.-déc. 1928) (contient des articles d'Albert Saint-Paul, Albert Mockel, André Gide, Francis Viélé-Griffin, Ernest Tonnelat, Karl Wolfskehl, Johannes Nohl, Bernt von Heiseler, Marc Valjean). Jean-Edouard Spenlé, "Stefan George," *Mercure de France*, CCV (1928), 5-33. Ernst Robert Curtius, *Französischer Geist im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bern, 1952). Friedrich Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst* (Berlin, 1930); et *Blätter für die Kunst, Auslese, 1892-98, 1898-1904, 1904-1909* (Berlin, 1899, 1904, 1909). Franz Rauhut, "Baudelaire und die deutsche Dichtung," *Deutsch-französische Rundschau*, IV (1931). Freya Hobohm, *Stefan George—Baudelaire, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Ein Vergleich* (Marburg, 1931). Marie-Luise Sior, *Stefan George und der französische Symbolismus* (Giessen, 1932). Enid Lowry Duthie, *L'Influence du symbolisme français dans le renouveau poétique de l'Allemagne* (Paris, 1933). Robert Pitrou, "Stefan George," *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* (déc. 1933). I. Geudefroy-Demombynes, "Stefan George," *Grande Revue* (déc. 1933). Fritz Neugass, "Un poète disparaît: Stefan George," *Revue Mondiale* (janv. 1934) (articles du même auteur dans le *Figaro* et dans la *Revue Bleue*). Edmond Jaloux, "Le Rôle de Stefan George," *Le Temps* (déc. 1933). Bruno Adriani, *Baudelaire und George* (Berlin, 1939). Maurice Boucher, *Stefan George. Choix de poèmes, traduit, préfacé et commenté* (Paris, 1941-43). Henri Mondor, Vie de Mallarmé (Paris, 1941-42).

BOOK REVIEWS

YEARBOOK OF COMPARATIVE AND GENERAL LITERATURE. W. P. Friederich and Horst Frenz, Editors. Chapel Hill, 1952. 148 p. (University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature, No. VI.)

This volume, published in collaboration with the Comparative Literature Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English and the Comparative Literature Section of the Modern Language Association, is a collection of essays and other information interesting to comparatists, together with a bibliography of the subject intended to bring up to date the volume of Baldensperger and Friederich, published in 1950. The work is a tribute, particularly, to the energy and devotion of Professor Friederich, whose unfailing efforts to organize and to stimulate interest in the subject have earned the gratitude of all comparatists.

In a volume of this kind there is bound to be an unevenness of merit in the articles presented. This is particularly true for the group of essays which forms the first part of the work. Outstanding is the contribution of Professor Peyre, in which he discusses the different fields covered by the subject, deplores the lack of boldness of scholars (which prevents them from attempting large works of synthesis), and makes a plea for a more audacious conception of comparative literature and a greater exercise of the imagination.

Next to Professor Peyre's article, in point of merit, is perhaps Professor Gillies' "Some Thoughts on Comparative Literature." In discussing comparatist problems the writer makes three points: (1) An endless amount of the most painstaking, detailed research is necessary to establish even small results, (2) comparative literature is not a science in the sense that definite "laws" can be evolved, and (3) comparatist studies bring out more forcibly than literary study in the narrowest sense the close relation between literature and the realities of life. It seems to the reviewer that the writer has not quite made his point in (3), but there is no question of the broadening effect of comparatist studies and their value in linking literary study to the sister humanistic disciplines of history and philosophy. Professor Gillies ends his article with the discussion of some specific problems to prove his contentions.

Charlton G. Laird's article brings the welcome news that the *Guide to Comparative Literature*, started some years ago by the late Arthur E. Christy and his committee, is now in press. The article is a sort of advanced notice, in detail, of the work. It is unfortunate that the writer does not give the title and the name of publisher, since these have apparently already been established.

Fred B. Millett's "Teaching the Humanities" is a plea for the type of course in which the tutor and student meet on a common intellectual level to explore the richness of literary masterpieces. It is an ideal of pedagogy which, by experience, has been proved hard to achieve, owing to administrative difficulties and (it must be admitted) a lack of personnel fitted to direct such groups. But ideals, though difficult of attainment, are still important and desirable and we should not too lightly brush them aside.

The most interesting element in Henry W. Wells' "World Literature" is his condemnation of the pedantry which frowns upon the study of literary masterpieces in translation. This is a subject well worth an article in itself.

Part II presents a series of biographies of great comparatists, and is followed

by a section devoted to the fortunes of comparative literature in several outstanding American and European institutions, which should be of value to young aspirants in the field. It does not, however, take into account the work which is going on in a number of other institutions in this country. The development of a department of comparative literature is a slow process. Too great haste often results in superficial results which eventually only serve to harm the subject. The devotees of comparative studies often have to contend with lethargy and indifference on the part of other departments of literature; this "isolationism" can be broken down only by the exercise of perseverance and tact. It is above all necessary that there be a supply of teachers anxious and competent to teach in the field. If the subject is to be well taught, the selection of a "devoted" instructor should always precede the approval of the course.

The part of the work which will appeal most to comparatist scholars is the fifth section, devoted to bibliography. Here the editors have compiled a supplement to the volume of Baldensperger and Friederich, with the addition of titles overlooked in that volume. The compilation of a bibliography is essentially a labor of love. It involves painstaking and meticulous toil with, often, no guarantee that its publication can be financed when it is finished. It would seem, therefore, an ungracious task to criticize such an effort. Nevertheless the reviewer feels that, in this case, it has to be done. Next to its completeness the chief test of a bibliography is its "usability." In this respect the supplement shows the same weaknesses as the original volume. The chief of these is the lack of an index of authors. For anyone possessing the name of the author but not the title, it would be difficult to find the work he is seeking in this bibliography. Your reviewer speaks from experience. The use of cross-references, too, would be invaluable. This would involve the numbering of each item, but the labor would be well worth while, even though costly. Possibly the next *Yearbook* might contain an index of the main volume and of the supplement. The value of this to the student cannot be overestimated.

The principle of collaboration, too, might be extended. The field is so vast that only a group of experts, accepting responsibility for their individual contributions, can accomplish the task successfully. The *Critical Bibliography of French Literature*, now being published under the direction of Professor Cabeen, might well be taken as a model.

In spite of minor defects, however, the editors are to be congratulated on their efforts in compiling this *Yearbook*, as well as on the spirit of devotion to the cause which has inspired the work. It is to be hoped that no amount of criticism will discourage them from continuing their labors in the future.

ARNOLD H. ROWBOTHAM

University of California, Berkeley

THE MEANING OF SHAKESPEARE. By Harold C. Goddard. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951. xii, 601 p.

Professor Goddard was for many years a teacher of English literature at Swarthmore; his book, posthumously published, is the fruit of a lifetime of Shakespearean study and teaching. Someone—nowhere identified—has spent much effort on editing the manuscript, preparing the index, and seeing the book through the press. With the handsome format provided by the publisher, this devoted labor has made the book a fine memorial. It also offers a fresh and illuminating, though at times erratic, appreciation of Shakespeare.

Goddard's approach to Shakespeare, a highly individual one, is fully stated and vigorously defended. His concern is not with the Elizabethan or the playwright, but with the poet—by which Goddard means the seer, the prophet, the man of imaginative vision. Imagination is the "elemental speech" by which life and nature are revealed to the poet, and through him to the reader; it is a delphic language, expressing fluid truths in many-sided symbols, intelligible only to the poet within each one of us. Interpretation, therefore, is identical in kind, if not in degree, with creation; it is an act of imaginative intuition, guarded against anarchy by the reader's double fidelity "to the text and to himself." Like the boy Cadwal in *Cymbeline*, a proper reader "strikes life into my speech and shows much more His own conceiving."

As might be expected from so subjective a method of interpretation, some of Goddard's readings are unconvincing. His interpretation of *The Merchant of Venice*, for example, makes Shylock the leaden casket, the ugly outside concealing truth and love within, while Portia and Bassanio are glittering gold and mercenary silver. The military virtue of Coriolanus is said to be founded on a lie; he is a warrior against the grain of his nature, whose hatred of the mob is a projection of his unconscious detestation of his own lower nature. These interpretations are in part the result of Goddard's identification of Shakespeare with Dostoevsky, whose romanticized Christianity, anti-Western and anticlassical, is surely very remote from Shakespeare's Renaissance-humanist version of Christian thought. Here Goddard seems as far from the mark as Knight, who once identified Shakespeare's philosophy with the "holism" of General Smuts.

Yet there is much that is sound and helpful in this book. It is vigorously written; the reader is carried along on the rapid tide of Goddard's energy and enthusiasm. His respect for the text, minutely and sensitively examined, reveals fresh and valid meaning in many familiar passages. On many plays, *Othello* and *King Lear* especially, Goddard gives vivid expression to sane and tenable interpretations. For the reader who does not swallow the book whole, who can discount the vagaries and profit from the insights, it is more valuable than many more sober and factual studies.

HOYT TROWBRIDGE

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ASPECTOS DA LITERATURA BARROCA. By Afrânio Coutinho. Rio de Janeiro: Noite, 1950. 140 p.

As the first full-length attempt to survey the whole of the literary baroque movement in Western Europe, Mr. Coutinho's book should be welcomed with eagerness and rejoicing. If, upon reading it, one experiences a succession of disappointments, one may leave it nevertheless with a clearer conception of the vacuum it should have begun to fill. The title gives no clue to the scope of the book. But the reader soon finds that he is being conducted on a comprehensive tour of the major baroque literatures. The procedure is more systematic than the word "aspectos" would suggest. But it is hard for the reader to decide just what sort of an audience he is meant to be. If the book is addressed to beginners, why are there so many abstruse and undocumented allusions? If it is addressed to scholars, why is there almost no critical discussion of scholarly opinion?

Before departing on his tour, the reader undergoes a rather bewildering indoctrination in the tangles of the term "baroque" itself. Unfortunately, the beginner will encounter no neat distinction between the history of the term, its present meanings in literary criticism, and the views of Mr. Coutinho. It is, in fact, star-

tling to reach the end of the book and read that all the disparate opinions quoted and paraphrased have helped "a formar a idéia aquí exposta do fenômeno" (p. 138); for no one conception of the baroque, adequately expounded and defended, seems to emerge.

As a matter of fact, the first part of the book, dealing with the concept of baroque, mostly summarizes and paraphrases a number of critics, whose views are not compared and evaluated but merely set forth, practically without comment. (The order is roughly as follows: Wellek, pp. 14-27; Spitzer, pp. 27-29; Croll, pp. 29-49; Weisbach, Stephen Gilman, etc., pp. 49-59; Hatzfeld, pp. 59-67.) For the most part, the summaries are detailed and accurate, though somewhat haphazard. But constantly one feels uncertain whether to take a statement as the opinion of the author or merely as part of the exposition of someone else's views. In reference to the continuity between Renaissance and baroque, for example, we read that "o fusionismo é o traço predominante do barroco" (p. 22); though this seems to be the author's conviction, nowhere in the rest of the book do we find clear documented elaboration of the statement. Occasionally one encounters an inaccuracy, either inherited from other writers or newly perpetrated. Mr. Coutinho seems to accept (p. 67) Professor Hatzfeld's difficult assumption that Donne's travels in Spain actually "Hispanized" his poetry.[1] He also attributes to Professor René Wellek an assertion that Wellek does not make. In his article, "The Concept of the Baroque in Literary Scholarship," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, V (1946), 77-109, Professor Wellek commends the "attempts to narrow down the repertory of stylistic devices characteristic of the baroque to a few specific figures or specific types of schemes" (p. 90). But he leaves the matter as it still must be left, up in the air, by asking, "but are they peculiar to the baroque?" Mr. Coutinho, however, unreservedly states that "a literatura barroca distinguir-se-ia, segundo Wellek, quanto ao estilo, pela abundância de ornatos, pela elaboração formal, pelo abuso de 'concetti'..." (p. 25). The result is an unfortunate falsification.

Apart from such errors of fact, there are minor defects—a number of names misspelled ("Roy Daniels," "Valbuena Pratt," "Johnson" for Jonson, not to mention some confusion in initials) and an assortment of typographical errors. Much more distressing are the essential faults which conspire almost to nullify the value of the book for scholars. First of all, there is the extreme dependence on secondary sources. A jumble of opinions, however well summarized, does not constitute an introduction. Second, there is a tendency to throw out large and flimsy generalizations. We are told, for example, that the atmosphere of the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries is "uma atmosfera lúgubre e tenebrosa, 'gloomy'" (p. 106). Often one finds oneself reading a mere catalogue of names, broken now and then by random comments. Third, the most startling defect of the book is the utter lack of scholarly apparatus. It used to be that gentlemanly "scholarship" disdained to append notes or bibliography or index, for fear, perhaps, of losing amateur standing. But now it is generally taken for granted that somewhere in a scholarly book the curious reader can find exact references. Mr. Coutinho is content to give in parentheses merely the surname of his source, citing no titles and no page references at all. Fortunately, for those who have explored Professor Wellek's full bibliography, most of the references will be familiar. Yet there are some references, chiefly in Portu-

[1] See Helmut Hatzfeld, "El predominio del espíritu español en las literaturas del siglo XVII," *Revista de Filología Hispánica*, III (1941), 9-23; and John Sparrow, "The Date of Donne's Travels," in *A Garland for John Donne*, ed. T. Spencer (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), pp. 123-151.

guese and Brazilian publications, which, for many interested scholars, would be very difficult to track down.

In its present state Mr. Coutinho's book is quite unsatisfactory. One emerges from it as from a forest filled with disembodied voices. Perhaps if it were greatly expanded to include the usual apparatus and a great deal more critical discussion, it would serve as a useful handbook or introduction to the problem of the literary baroque. But much more welcome to scholars would be a comprehensive stylistic study of Luso-Brazilian literature during the baroque age. Mr. Coutinho himself bemoans the present state of literary historiography both in Portugal and in Brazil. With his wide acquaintance with the baroque problem, surely he is the one to give us penetrating studies of such figures as Rodrigues Lôbo or Antônio Vieira, relating them to the baroque tradition in the other literatures of Western Europe.

LOWRY NELSON, JR.

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EUROPÄISCHE LITERATUR UND LATEINISCHES MITTELALTER. By Ernst Robert Curtius. Bern: A. Francke, 1948. 601 p.

In this rather impressive work Professor Curtius has attempted to give a synthesis of his research during the past two decades in the field of mediaeval literature and its implications for European literature in general. The essential thesis of the book—one might say the conclusion which it is supposed to validate—is anticipated by Curtius in the initial chapter, in which he defines his concept of European literature. This concept seems to be the result of the fusion of two ideas: (1) a Bergsonian concept of the *fonction fabulatrice*, the deeply rooted psychological necessity for fictional creation, and (2) a Toynbean interpretation of history, which reviews history as the composite of the life cycles of various multinational civilizations rather than from the narrow political or nationalistic point of view. Curtius' book is concerned with European literature as the history of the *fonction fabulatrice* within European civilization.

In European literature the Latin Middle Ages hold a key position, for they form the essential link in the chain of historical continuity which, according to Curtius, characterizes European literature. The method by which he hopes to demonstrate his point is also intimated in the first chapter; he rejects all methods of literary interpretation which employ categories imported into literary criticism from art, psychology, etc., and makes a plea for the minute philological analysis of texts, which alone is the method directly adapted to the subject matter of literature. He then proceeds to discuss the concept of the Latin Middle Ages, which are for him the totality of the contribution made by the culture of Rome to the mediaeval period. He stresses the cultural predominance of the Romance countries in the Middle Ages, an emphasis which of course lends additional importance to the Roman heritage. England is considered by Curtius as largely absorbed into the Romance orbit, and Germany is depicted as of culturally secondary importance during the mediaeval period.

In Chapter III Curtius lays the ground work for his presentation of literature as a form of historical continuity. He declares that literature is a part of education, which fact, of course, makes it share in the continuity of tradition. Thus assimilating literature to education, he concludes that an

understanding of mediaeval literature necessitates also an understanding of mediaeval school systems, which he discusses at some length. This brings him to what is probably the major point of his argument—as a result of the interpenetration of literature and education, the seven liberal arts, and especially the art of rhetoric, exerted upon literature before and during the Middle Ages a deep and lasting influence.

Chapters IV-X are essentially an outgrowth of this point. Rhetoric knew certain fixed forms of expression and stylistic devices or subject matters (topics) which it gave to European literature and which European literature developed and repeated under various forms. Curtius discusses a wide range of topics, some minutely detailed and quite narrowly formalistic, others of broader scope and wider implications, such as affected modesty, the combination of youth and age in the same person, the world as a stage of which God is the stage manager. Some topics of presumably greater implications are discussed in separate chapters: the concept of Goddess Nature as the symbol of procreative power (Chapter VI), which is traced from Ovid to Claudian, Bernhard Silvestris, and the *Roman de la Rose*; the idealized and stereotyped description of nature, the *locus amoenus*, which gives him the opportunity to discuss the history of the pastoral; the panegyric style in its specific application to the description of the idealized hero (Chapter IX), which is for Curtius a starting point from which to trace the contrast between wisdom and valor as the characteristic theme of the European epic tradition.

Curtius leaves the discussion of rhetoric to consider the relationship of poetry with philosophy and theology (Chapters XI and XII). After a short description of the time-honored and probably pre-Platonic quarrel between philosophy and the poet's claim to communicate truth, he comes to the conclusion that during the early Middle Ages—especially as a result of the loose usage of the term "philosophy"—a complete fusion or rather confusion took place between philosophy and poetry and, as a result, between philosophy and theology also. This state of affairs was terminated, according to Curtius, by St. Thomas, who reaffirmed the independence of philosophy as opposed to the liberal arts and definitely banned poetry to an inferior position. From this Curtius draws the important implication that Dante, who claimed to combine philosophy, theology, and poetry on the same level in his work (Curtius demonstrates this by an interpretation of Dante's letter to Can Grande), could not possibly have been in accord with Thomistic philosophy.

Two chapters of the work are devoted to an analysis of constant themes of European literature—the invocation of the Muses (Chapter XV) and the book as a symbol (Chapter XVI). Special attention is devoted to the concept of classicism (Chapter XIV), which is not considered by Curtius from the usual aesthetic point of view (simplicity, restraint, etc.) but is approached with the idea that classical authors are those who are accepted in certain conventionalized groupings (canons). The aesthetic concept is, however, utilized by implication when the discussion of classicism is followed by a treatment of mannerism (Chapter XV), which is opposed to the classic by its excessive ornamentation and intentional refinement. Mannerism is assimilated by Curtius to classical and mediaeval rhetoric, and the discussion is highlighted by a treatment of Spanish *conceptismo* (especially Gracián's *Agudeza*), which is thus brought into direct relation to classical rhetoric.

An entire chapter is devoted to Dante, in whom, Curtius believes, are found all the currents which mediaeval Latinity contributed to European literature. Among Dante's precursors and those who influenced Dante's work most directly,

Curtius emphasizes, of course, Virgil, then Cicero's dream of Scipio, and the philosophical and theological poetry of Alanus of Lille. The highlights of this chapter are probably the view that Dante meant to convey a prophetic message of the impending doom of the world and the demonstration that Dante's Beatrice was not Beatrice, the daughter of the banker Folco Portinari (a point which Curtius labors at unnecessary length), but must somehow be interpreted as part of a theological system in which she, with the Lucia of the *Inferno* and a third, probably the Virgin Mary, forms an integral part of the forces of salvation.

The final chapter, in which Curtius again emphasizes the intrinsic continuity of European literature as demonstrated by his method of detailed textual analysis, is followed by nearly 200 pages of "excursuses," investigations of more detailed problems which are sometimes only loosely connected with the subject of the main portion of the book. The misunderstanding of antiquity during the Middle Ages, poetry and scholasticism, brevity as a stylistic ideal, and other topics are here considered. Two investigations, "Montesquieu, Ovid, and Virgil" and "Diderot and Horace," are by Curtius' own admission unrelated to the book, but are supposed to show the deep influence which the Latinity of other epochs than the Middle Ages exerted directly on the literature of Europe.

That some points should be open to criticism and leave room for discussion is of course inevitable in a work such as this. Is it really true, as Curtius asserts, that Thomism is constitutionally incapable of arriving at any theory of art? Or is it not rather only the doctrine of pure art, or art for art's sake alone, that is excluded by the Thomistic subordination of art to theology and philosophy? Just what is the role, according to Curtius, of Beatrice in the *Commedia*? Does not his explanation merely replace one unknown by another? However, generally speaking, Curtius has handled the details in his study with erudition and skill.

The really serious question which must be raised is whether the work successfully demonstrates the main thesis to which it is devoted. One may legitimately ask whether a large part of the book does not emphasize the merely formalistic at the expense of the real meaning of literature. Just how much closer do we come to the understanding of literature if we are aware of the fact that an author uses the topic of "affected modesty" or describes an idealized landscape of the type of a *locus amoenus*? Curtius attempts to justify the overemphasis on the formalistic by insisting in his last chapter (pp. 392-395) on the importance of form and the necessity of a pre-existing pattern of form before artistic creation can take place. But to this the objection could be raised that great artists have often created their own forms (meter, stanza, etc., even genres). Could it not be said also that the content, the ideas which the writer wants to communicate, is primary and the form adapts itself to the content and thus remains of secondary importance only? In his discussion of mannerism Curtius makes yet another point for the formalistic approach. Form, unlike ideas or content, is obvious; thus demonstration of relationship in the realm of forms is easier and not subject to philosophical doubts and speculations (p. 293). But, if relationships in form are more obvious, are they not also less meaningful?

The reliance on stylized topics for the demonstration of relationships and continuity within European literature has yet another defect. As Curtius himself intimates at times (see the discussion of the motif of "youth and age combined into one" in China, in the Buddhistic legend, and in Etruscan, p. 109), many of the motifs, themes, and topics which he discusses are not specifically European, but can be found at any and all times in many different civilizations.[1] If this is so,

[1] The use of the book as a symbol, the comparison of the world with a theater play, the distinction of the nobility of the soul as opposed to nobility of birth, and

can they really be relied upon to demonstrate continuity within European literature? Since they appear independently in other civilizations, they could also appear independently within European culture.

As a result of this thesis, Curtius' presentation of the Middle Ages inevitably overemphasizes the Latin element at the expense of national factors, such as the Celtic or Germanic, and of contributions made to mediaeval thought by the Orient and Christianity. The emphasis on continuity results, of course, in the discussion of periods as well as of authors, in the stressing of the inherited rather than the newly created. A presentation which is primarily concerned with the demonstration of continuity is in danger of losing sight of the fact that it is after all the characteristically individual which accounts for really living literature.

The writer as creator does not fare too well in Curtius' presentation, for he appears largely determined by the cultural tradition in which he lives. It seems, therefore, surprising that Curtius closes his book with a panegyric on the artist as a creator, with a survey of the history of the concept of the creative artist. Curtius finds this concept only in Longinus, Macrobius, and then in Goethe. He regrets this gap in the tradition and feels that Longinus was unjustly overlooked and misunderstood by a tradition of mediocrity. And he asks the rhetorical question whether mediocrity is not, after all, the strongest binding link in the chain of continuity (p. 404). But if it is, then we have also found the explanation why such a large proportion of Curtius' book is, because of its very thesis, limited to the study of the mediocre.

The vernacular and national literatures of the Middle Ages do not play a great part in the book. Yet, in the light of Curtius' thesis of European continuity, their relationship to Latin literature is, of course, of paramount importance. For Curtius this relationship is one of direct proportionality (see Chapter XVIII). To the much-discussed question why French literature makes its appearance before the other Romance literatures, he gives a simple answer—in twelfth-century France the study of classical Latin writers and with it the writing of Latin literature flourished. Thus a popular literature could develop. In Italy, on the other hand, there was little interest in Latin literature, and as a result Italian literature makes a much later appearance. Among the scholars who, like Curtius, fully accept the Bédier-Faral attack on the romantic interpretation of the origin of literatures, no one has put the answer quite so simply; generally an attempt is made to find other supplementary reasons for the lateness of Italian literature and especially for the absence of an Italian epic—see, e.g., A. Viscardi, *Le origini* (Milan, 1939), who suggested the absence of an uninterrupted dynastic tradition as reason for the lack of an Italian epic. Familiarity with Latin writers existed in Italy, perhaps not to the same extent as in France in the twelfth century, but definitely before then; and when it does exist it can be made to account for the *Gesta Berengarii imperatoris*. But this is, I think, a rather dull poem. The *Roland*

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affected modesty—to name some of Curtius' topics—are apparently found in many literatures. I am indebted to my colleague, Dr. Erwin Reifler, for some classical Chinese examples. In the famous novel, *The Records of the Journey to the West*, by Su Ch'eng En (translated by Arthur Waley under the title *Monkey*, New York, 1943), reference is made to the Book of Fate (p. 106). Mangtzu, Book VI, Part I, Ch. XVI (Legge's translation), speaks of the nobility of Heaven (nobility of the soul) as opposed to the nobility of man (nobility by birth). In "The Dream of the Red Chamber," completed by Kao E, the idea, "at the end of my life you are born," is expressed by the statement, "in the world of confusion, when I have finished singing you ascend the stage." The topic of affected modesty, finally, would be typical of almost any Chinese author's preface.

is not. Perhaps Gaston Paris and Pio Rajna tended to overlook the fact that the writer of the *Roland* knew the *Aeneid;* and Bédier and Faral made an important contribution by proving that he did. Curtius, however, makes it almost appear that the writer of the *Roland* could produce a master work *because* he knew Virgil. But such knowledge, after all, could have been only one of many factors.

Would it not be possible to connect the earlier appearance of French literature with the fact that the French language as such also makes its appearance some 150 years before any of the other Romance tongues and to connect this in turn with the fact that in France there appeared an awareness of a popular language as opposed to Latin, and a national consciousness, long before such an awareness made its appearance in Spain and in Italy? In other words, one might well look for an explanation of the late appearance of Italian literature in the opposite direction from that indicated by Curtius. In Italy the consciousness of the direct heritage of Rome, the idea of an uninterrupted continuity, was so great that it smothered for a long time any possibility of a national literature in the vernacular. Some 150 years after the writer of the *Roland* had sung the praise of *dulce France,* Dante still had to defend the use of the vernacular for poetry, a vernacular which even for him was still only a vulgar form of Latin.

Throughout the work, Curtius is confronted with a problem created by the very thesis which he tries to uphold, the attempt to amalgamate a presentation of literature with a philosophy of history. He argues at length against the attempt to use the categories of architecture, painting, etc. in the discussion of literature. But, while the medium of these arts is different from that of literature, they share with literature at least the purpose of conveying aesthetic experience. Not so history. The medium of history is the progression of time. Time is the dimension of reality in which it operates and relationship in time is the only concern of history. For literature the dimension of time is not a meaningful medium and even the question of influences and predecessors, which is the one question which the interpretation of literature must ask of history, is ultimately, as we have pointed out before, only a stepping stone to the more important question of individuality. And even when we consider continuity and influences, we must keep in mind that influences and continuity in literature do not need the medium of contiguous time, as Curtius himself points out when he considers the Latinity present in all eras of European literature and in his discussion of Diderot and Horace; really great minds and artists can bridge the medium of time and contact and influence directly their remote successors, who in turn interpret these influences in terms of their own unique personalities.

The historical continuity which Curtius traces does not lie in literature at all, but in the cultural tradition, in the inevitably continuous stream of civilization and culture in which literature is produced. This is an important difference which, unfortunately, the book does not clearly bring out. Great literature towers above the stream of continuity; while the stream may reach the foot of the mountain, we must leave it if we are to reach the peak.

Curtius plunges into the detailed discussion of his demonstration of continuity with a motto taken from Aby Warburg: "Der liebe Gott steckt im Detail" (p. 43). To start a literary interpretation with the consideration of detail is a well-known procedure, one might say a "topic" of literary criticism. Its use by Curtius also demonstrates how carefully one must evaluate any "topic," for things which look and sound the same may be radically different according to the context in which they are used. It is indeed possible to start from the consideration of a small detail, but the detail must be made meaningful by a synthesis

which refers it to the totality of the literary work of which it is a part. Curtius has often shown himself a master of just this manner of approach. But in a large portion of his book his thesis prevents him from following it out consistently and with its original meaning. Instead of synthesizing detail within the same author, he traces detail from one author to the next. The method of detailed analysis becomes meaningless when it is dragged into the medium of time and made to serve the historical approach.

Curtius is at his best whenever he pauses to explain an individual author, whenever he stops to synthesize detail for one specific work or individual, as in the explanation of Virgil, who is approached not from the point of view of continuity but rather in terms of differences from Homer (pp. 195-198), or in the explanation of Dante's letter to Can Grande (pp. 226-230), or in the discussion of the significance of Gracián's *Agudeza* (pp. 295-303). Curtius demonstrates that an understanding of the letter to Can Grande presupposes a knowledge of the stylistic classifications of the thirteenth century, and shows that the *Agudeza* can be understood only if the interpreter is aware of the rhetorical distinction between *ingenium* and *judicium*. But this by itself does not prove the thesis of historical continuity in literature itself; it merely underlines the necessity for historical knowledge on the part of the interpreter.

Curtius has given us a very interesting work. The book is extremely well written, the style is admirably elegant and lucid, even though the over-all organization of the book, which progresses, as Curtius explains, in spiral form (p. 385), may prove somewhat bewildering to some readers. The work underlines, especially for the layman and nonspecialist, the undoubtedly great importance of mediaeval Latinity for the understanding of literature. But it claims to do more than that. It preaches a thesis with regard to European literature in general and it aims to demonstrate a specific method of analysis. But the thesis conflicts with the subject matter, and the method clashes with the thesis.

A translation by W. R. Trask has just been done for the Bollingen Series.

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ÜBERLIEFERUNG UND GESTALTUNG. Theophil Spoerri zum sechzigsten Geburtstag. Zürich: Speer-Verlag, 1950. 206 p.

It is with great personal pleasure that I report on this volume offered to Theophil Spoerri for his sixtieth birthday. Spoerri has long been active in French, Italian, and German literary studies. He has been a professor at the University of Zürich since 1922 and was its rector from 1948 to 1950. He is associate editor of *Trivium*, a journal whose title signifies the meeting of the three cultural languages of Central Europe which are the national languages of Switzerland (German, French, and Italian), and indicates the breadth of Spoerri's research. His work shows that he is imbued with the true comparative spirit, not bound by mere chronological or geographical considerations, but sensitive to poetical expression in different languages and cultural patterns.

The present testimonial volume is representative of the methods used by contemporary Swiss criticism. It opens with Max Wehrli's essay on "Wolfram's Humor," which points out in *Parzival* (occasionally in comparison with Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval*) comic elements that have been added to traditional motifs. The tendency towards burlesque is so typical that Wehrli calls Wolfram "einer der ältesten Meister" in the history of literary humor in Europe.

Marcel Raymond's paper, "Sur la conversion de Pascal," contains a series of notes on Pascal's writings towards the end of 1654. There are interesting remarks on the psychological development of the French philosopher at this period, and solid contributions to literary history. For instance, Raymond re-examines, through textual observations and references to external evidence, the problem of the date of *Le Mystère de Jésus.* The *Mystère* has been tentatively dated either in the last years of Pascal's activity or in 1655. Raymond's investigation presents sound evidence for a closer dating. The *Mystère* seems to have been written immediately after the *Mémorial,* i.e., before January 2, 1655, and probably in the second half of December 1654.

A skillful essay by Ernst Howald brings us to the eighteenth century. "Die Exposition von Diderots *Père de Famille*" is an excellent sample of the best "Züriche Schule." Well argued and smoothly written, it demonstrates that literary criticism and straight philology are capable of close cooperation. The word "Exposition" means here the special art shown by Diderot in choosing the exact tensional moment to open his drama, *Le Père de famille.* By a superb reconstruction of the motifs and antecedents of the play, as they converge at its beginning, Howald shows that Diderot possessed a remarkable ability to "expose" in the very first scenes the essentials of the comedy. Diderot's dramatic work deserves closer attention.

Another eighteenth-century study is Arnald Steiger's article on "Voltaire und Spanien." The well-known specialist on Alfonso el Sabio reminds us that Voltaire admired especially the Arabic period in Spanish history and that he carefully ignored Spanish lyric poets, mystical writers, and even novelists, to consider only Spanish drama; Steiger wishes to show indirectly how the deformation of judgment in well-known writers and publicists causes those pernicious deformations of judgment of nation on nation, those evil legends which represent every Spaniard as a torero, every American as a drunkard, or every Italian as a Romeo or a brigand. Remember Voltaire's judgment on Calderón: "C'est le fou le plus extraordinaire et le plus absurde qui se soit jamais mêlé d'écrire." "Caldéron est aussi barbare que Shakespeare. En vérité, il n'y a que les Italiens et les Français, leurs disciples, qui aient connu le théâtre." And his conclusion: "Toutes les nations d'Europe . . . pourront juger que le bon goût n'est qu'en France." Thus were born the various *leyendas negras,* against which Steiger makes a very justified protest.

Emil Staiger's essay on "Lessings *Minna von Barnhelm,*" though not one of his most sparkling, is a brilliant contribution, and shows how wonderfully complete the author's conception of literary history is. Staiger not only uses all possible technical methods in his criticism but he *lives* it; he seems to hope and fear in literature, to become angry and rejoice. His writings are therefore always highly vivid. In his essay on *Minna* he first outlines the milieu, then tries to penetrate the secret harmony existing between each character and the general structure of the drama. He thereby perceives all the more clearly the presence of the writer himself in the result of his creative effort. See, for instance, the passage concerning Minna's light joking in her dialogue with Tellheim: "So geht es noch lange mutwillig weiter. Nun sind diese Scherze aber nicht ganz so harmlos, wie man annehmen möchte. Sie nähern sich jener Art von Witz, die Lessing selber oft in schwierigen Stunden an den Tag gelegt, die Lichtenberg in den Aphorismen zur Meisterschaft ausgebildet hat. Dieser Witz vereinigt mit Worten, mit sprachlicher Taschenspielerkunst, was sachlich unvereinbar ist. Insofern wahrt er nach außen die Form. Er tut so, als wäre alles

in Ordnung. Doch da es nur Taschenspielerkünste sind und nur ein Schein von Ordnung erzeugt wird, erklärt der Witz zugleich, daß die Sache in Wahrheit nicht recht stimmt. So spiegeln Minnas Scherze [eine] prästabilierte Harmonie vor . . . "

Next R. R. Bezzola, in "Manzonis dichterische Gestaltung des Leidens" deals with Manzoni's conception of "provvida sventura" (earthly suffering which purifies) and the attainment of peace through suffering. He finds examples of such ideas in the *Inni Sacri* and the tragedies, as well as in the *Promessi Sposi*. He has excellent remarks to make on the "space" Manzoni creates in his representation of suffering (" . . . dieses Bild vermittelt nur einen Teil der manzonischen Welt, die horizontale Fläche. Entscheidend ist jedoch der Raum, der durch ein immer wieder sich offenbarendes Eingreifen einer Kraft von oben entsteht . . . ") and on the vertical exchange between man and God which dominates this space. There are good remarks also on the complexity of Manzoni's syntax, which reflects the complications of suffering, groping, seeking, through which final pacification is reached. ("Manzonis Satz ist ein nie ermüdendes Tasten nach dem Wesentlichen, voller *ma* und *però*, der Satz des suchenden und leidenden Menschen, dem das Suchen und Leiden aber nicht Qual sind, sondern tiefste Lebensnotwendigkeit, Bedürfnis nach Klarheit und Frieden durch das Suchen und Leiden hindurch.") On the other hand, Bezzola's chronological separation of a "happy" period and an "unhappy" period in Manzoni's artistic history and his limitation of Manzoni's creative activity to the happy period seem rather rigid. Does Bezzola really believe that the creative moment of the *Promessi Sposi* is "sozusagen fertig" with the first form of the novel? Or does he wish to show indirectly by that statement his disagreement with recent studies on the "elaboration-creation" of the novel between *Sposi Promessi* (first form) and *Promessi Sposi* (final form)?

"Un paragrafo sconosciuto della storia dell'italiano letterario nell'ottocento" by Gianfranco Contini brings to light a case of Bolognese dialect being "promoted" to literary dignity. Interesting because of its geographical origin and its date, the novel *Il Diavolo del Sant'Ufficio*, by a certain A. Zanolini, appeared in 1847, forty years before the "naturalismo meridionale" of Verga and other novelists writing at the end of the nineteenth century. The introduction of regional and dialectal elements into the written language is usually credited to these "naturalisti meridionali." Contini carefully observes the Bolognese idioms introduced into the *Diavolo del Sant'Ufficio* with a stylistic function, not as a curiosity or as an ornament; he is not interested in folklore, and tries to bring forward only real linguistic evidence. Thus our attention is directed to typical expressions of colloquial family milieu (e.g., *sta mo buono, senta pure, va pur là*, and so on). These naturally introduce a regional coloring into the language, without breaking any lexicological habits. They are well illustrated by Contini, although he insufficiently defines them as "giunture foniche" or "qualcosa che al limite è interiezione."

A meditative essay by E. Brock-Sulzer on "Jules Renard" ("er ist ganz eigentlich ein Algebraiker der Sprache"; " . . . so wird die Pause zum eigentlichen und sichbaren Willensausdruck dieses Stiles"), a very fine paper by Gotthard Jedlicka on "Paul Valéry und die bildenden Künste," and a study by Gerda Zeltner-Neukomm on "St. J. Perse als Dichter der Fremdheit" conclude the testimonial volume. Mrs. Zeltner, treating the French author discovered some twenty years ago by T. S. Eliot, gives an accurate description of what is considered his main poem, *Anabase*, and deals with his world of imagery.

Through the study of syntactical and lexicological evidence, the critic brings out successfully the main features of the poem (e.g., the immobility of its world) and explains obscure passages. With this essay we reach our own century. The testimonial volume thus embraces a long period of civilization, and shows an excellent application of Goethe's best legacy, the idea of a *Weltliteratur*.

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AMERIKA UND ENGLAND IM DEUTSCHEN, ÖSTERREICHISCHEN UND SCHWEIZERISCHEN SCHRIFTTUM DER JAHRE 1945-1949. EINE BIBLIOGRAPHIE. By Richard Mönnig. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1951. ix, 259 p.

In 1937 Anselm Schlösser published a bibliographical and statistical work, *Die englische Literatur in Deutschland von 1895 bis 1934*. Richard Mönnig's work might be regarded as a continuation of Schlösser's endeavor. It is an attempt to picture the Anglo-American world and Anglo-American literature, "nicht wie sie sind, sondern wie Deutschland, Österreich und die Schweiz sie sahen." For that reason not only translations of belletristic works are listed but works about England and America as well, whether or not translated. There are 4406 numbered items and fourteen pages of unnumbered introductory items.

In the introduction Mönnig offers some preliminary statistics regarding translations into various languages. Twenty-five per cent of the works appearing in Spain are translations. For Sweden and Finland the proportion is 14-16, for the U.S.S.R. 12-15, for Switzerland 10-11; for France, Italy, Holland, and Norway 10; for England and the United States 9; for Germany 3-6. Of the works translated from foreign languages in Germany in 1948, 29 per cent were from the English, in Switzerland 51 per cent.

As the author admits in the introduction: "Diese amusischen Zahlen sagen nichts über den Inhalt und Wert . . . über die Bedeutung der Bücher aus." Regarding the quality of the works opinions will, of course, differ. A question which interested me is to what extent favor for various English and American authors is changing abroad. By a point system based on his statistics of publication, Schlösser (p. 174) produced a list of "meist gelesene [englische] Autoren." Had Mönnig attempted the same procedure based on his list, the results would have been slightly different.

A. Schlösser, 1895-1934: Dickens, Wilde, *Wallace, Doyle, [Shakespeare], Marryat, *Shaw, Stevenson, *Scott, Defoe, Swift, Kipling, *Bulwer, Galsworthy, *Carlyle, *Byron, *Oppenheim, *Wells, *Fletcher, *Ruskin.

B. Mönnig, 1945-1949: Dickens, Stevenson, *London, Wilde, Shakespeare, Defoe, *Mark Twain, *Poe, Swift, Conrad, Kipling, Hawthorne, Seton, Priestley, Galsworthy, Forester, *Upton Sinclair, *Whitman, *Irving, *Melville.

Before considering these lists some observations are necessary. In the first place, Schlösser did not include Shakespeare in his survey. I have arbitrarily given him the same place he occupies in Mönnig's list. In the second place, Schlösser did not include authors of the United States. In list A ten British names out of the twenty listed do not reappear in the 1945-1949 list. These are marked with an asterisk. In list B there are nine Americans, who on Schlösser's principle did not appear in the first list. These are similarly marked. It is quite clear that most of the Americans would have appeared as "meist gelesene Auto-

ren" in list A if Schlösser had included them in his survey. A sketchy survey conducted by the Uhu through the Leihbibliotheken in 1926, published under the title "Was der deutsche Bürger liest," rated the popularity of all authors in the sequence: Jack London, Ben Lindsay, Remarque, Herzog, Mann, Undset, Ganghofer, Wassermann, Upton Sinclair, Galsworthy.

Bulwer makes a belated disappearance from list B. The absence of Scott is more remarkable. Byron's star was already on the wane at the turn of the century and Carlyle was a comet which appeared briefly in the ideological heaven in the 1930s. Shaw is still prominent, at least on the German stage of today. Those who read criminal novels—and who does not—will infer from list B that Conan Doyle and Edgar Wallace no longer stand highest in favor. The standing is now Agatha Christie 9, John Dickson Carr and Carter Dickson (Mönnig is not aware they are the same person) 9, Wallace 5, Doyle 4.

Under various rubrics several other interesting facts come to light. The Theaterabtheilung der amerikanischen Kommission has translated over fifty plays by contemporary Americans. Most of these are in manuscript, but are available for the stage. Maxwell Anderson, Rachel Crothers, Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice, William Saroyan, John Steinbeck, Thornton Wilder, and Tennessee Williams are among the playwrights included.

The subject of English-German literary relations is still a live topic. Six dissertations were accepted on special topics within this sphere by the University of Vienna alone during the years 1945-1949.

A similar bibliography for 1950 alone is to appear shortly; in it correction of a few errors in the introductory portion of the 1945-49 list may be possible. Of greatest urgency is to lay with a silver bullet two literary ghosts. There are no such works as those attributed to L. M. Price on p. 10 and to R. M. Palmer on p. 13. In place of the latter might appear: Palmer, Phillip M., *German Works on America, 1492-1800*, University of California Press, 1952.

From Seidensticker, p. 18, the question mark may be safely removed. The second edition of the well-known Betz-Baldensperger *La Littérature comparée* is properly listed, but unfortunately its successor is not: Baldensperger, F. and Friederich, W. P., *Bibliography of Comparative Literature*, University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature, I, Chapel Hill, 1950; xxiv+ 701 pp. It is to be hoped that Mönnig's reports will continue to appear.

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RUSSKI EVROPEETS: MATERIALY DLIA BIOGRAFII I KHARAKTERISTIKI KNIAZIA P. B. KOZLOVSKOGO. (A Russian European: Materials for the Biography and Characterization of Prince P. B. Kozlovsky.) By Gleb Struve. San Francisco: "Delo," 1950. iii, 164 p.

On July 20, 1810, Prince Kozlovsky wrote in a letter to Mme de Staël: "La vie d'un homme obscur est bien peu de chose." Professor Struve has here made an effort (one which we may hope to see continued, according to his indications) to disprove this aphorism of his hero. As the subtitle suggests, the author's intention has been to present a variety of materials to serve as evidence of Kozlovsky's neglected historical significance, and at the same time to provide the unassembled parts out of which a definitive study might some day be made. As befits such a work, only one-third of its pages are devoted to a connected discussion, which is presented in five chapters: "Life and Personality of Prince P. B. Kozlovsky,"

"'Dekabrist bez dekabria': Kozlovsky's Liberalism," "Partisan of Chaadaev: Kozlovsky's View of the Destiny of Russia," "Kozlovsky as a Catholic," and "Kozlovsky's Literary Views and Sympathies." Fourteen appendices occupy the remaining two-thirds of the text. These appendices provide notes upon loosely related topics ("Kozlovsky and Nicholas I," "Kozlovsky and Pushkin," "Kozlovsky and Heine—Kozlovsky and Balzac," "Kozlovsky on the Papacy and the Religious Question," "On Kozlovsky's Verse," etc.) and bring together useful source materials, such as private correspondence (among the most interesting of which are letters to Chateaubriand and Mme de Staël). This collection is illustrated by a number of interesting portraits and caricatures (which Kozlovsky's tremendous corpulence helped to inspire).

It is clear that the desire to rescue Kozlovsky from obscurity has been stimulated partly by considerations of a political character; the author finds in this "Russian European" a figure "whom it is particularly appropriate to recall just now when Russia, under the pressure of despotism ... is repudiating, in the blind arrogance of pseudo-patriotism, her European heritage and kinship" (p. 59). But a wider interest animates the book, which is the product also of a historian's fondness for an old-world nobleman, enormous in girth and also in his appetite for life, especially the "high life" of cosmopolitan culture—a Russian "engraissé par la civilisation," as Mme de Staël described him.

Prince Peter Borisovich Kozlovsky (1783-1840) spent his active career in the Russian diplomatic service, which effectually made of him a polyglot continental European, with strong Catholic, liberal, and (also *avant la lettre*) Russian Westerner sympathies. After service in Italy, at the Sardinian court, at the Congress of Vienna, and as minister in Stuttgart and Karlsruhe, he was retired before the age of forty and thus enabled to live the life of a distinguished European traveler, received in the highest social circles, including the royal courts of George IV, Louis XVIII, Charles X, Louis-Philippe, and Friedrich Wilhelm. His chief charm was his talk; seemingly a skillful diplomat, he appropriately displayed a mastery of that principal resource of diplomacy, and in particular of *la langue diplomatique*. Prince P. A. Viazemsky quoted him as saying, not wholly in jest, that Providence had given him only one task on earth: to talk.

This disposition to make a career of talking reveals much about Kozlovsky, who for Viazemsky combined the courtier of Versailles and the English freethinker. His talk was clearly not small talk; wide reading, extensive acquaintanceships, a prodigious memory, and unorthodox views made his conversation a major cultural achievement. This fact, joined to his reluctance to put his words on paper ("my ideas trip over the letters of the alphabet"), makes him an attractive personality to contemplate but a difficult subject to study. The student of Kozlovsky is consequently forced to rely chiefly upon the writings of such contemporaries as Viazemsky, the German Dr. Wilhelm Dorow, and the French Marquis de Custine (whose journal, *La Russie en 1839*, recently translated as *Journey for Our Time*, contains conversations with "Prince K.")—in addition to the fragments of Kozlovsky's own literary remains. Thus Struve's bibliography names only a handful of works (primarily those by the three writers just mentioned) devoted to Kozlovsky, but goes on to list approximately seven pages of references "in which Kozlovsky is mentioned." Indeed, the degree to which the author is obliged to rely on Dorow's *Fürst Kosloffsky* (Leipzig, 1846) and to treat his own work as a continuation of Dorow's leads to the supposition that one of the author's purposes has been to transmit existing materials to a Russian-reading public, which might be expected to take courage from the life and person of this Russian nobleman. This impression of the author's intention is supported by the fact that several of the appendices are

substantially Russian translations of letters and extracts originally composed in Western European languages.

In only a very limited degree can Kozlovsky be considered a figure of literary interest or importance. He employed his engaging and incisive verbal art mostly as a "defender of lost causes," as he was once called, or in drafting diplomatic dispatches, or in dictating articles on such subjects as steam engines (on which he published a piece in *The Contemporary*). His "literary views and sympathies" are extensive enough to allow Professor Struve to include a chapter on the subject; but this is by far the shortest, and the last, of the five introductory chapters. Kozlovsky's breadth of intellectual sympathy, which let him place a high regard for Shakespeare and Gogol alongside a love of Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Racine, and Pushkin, may further endear him to us; but his literary opinions remain essentially only one small facet of a many-sided personality. Nor can the distinction of acquaintances, even though they include Chateaubriand, Mme de Staël, and Pushkin, bestow literary importance; and Professor Struve's insistence that Kozlovsky's name "is indissolubly joined with Pushkin" (p. 59) does little to rescue Kozlovsky from obscurity.

The author's decision to publish these "materials" rather than to hold them for a definitive biography corroborates the supposition that our knowledge of Kozlovsky is not likely to be made perfect. But this book may well serve to give to the majority of its readers all they need or wish to know.

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LES DITS ET RÉCITS DE MYTHOLOGIE FRANÇAISE. By Henri Dontenville. Paris: Payot, 1950. 255 p.

M. Henri Dontenville[1] has said that, though French schools and universities teach what the Greeks and the Romans may have believed in, they do not mention the legends and the traditions which have been intimately connected with the life of the French people for centuries. The result is that a Frenchman, who is familiar with the struggle of Hercules and Cacus, does not know how Maugis vanquished Bayart. He may have heard of Lorelei, but not of Mélusine, of Gulliver, but not of Gargantua. M. Dontenville wants to deal with a French mythology. But is it a mythology which British folklore does not know? It can at least be said that a mythology prospered in the countries where the languages of *oïl* and *oc* are spoken, whereas, far from growing, it became weaker and paler on the other side of the Channel. M. Dontenville explains why. In the fifth century, Saxons settled in Great Britain—Visigoths, Burgundians, and Franks in Gaul. The Saxons destroyed the Christian churches of Great Britain, whereas the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Visigoths built new churches in Gaul. Therefore the reaction of the Celtic population was different in Great Britain from what it was in Gaul. In Gaul the spirit of resistance was anti-Christian, whereas it was Christian in Great Britain. The legendary Arthur became a Christian in Great Britain, a pagan in Gaul, where he was cursed by the Church.

Thus a destructive mythology was developed in Gaul, in a spirit of opposition against the invaders. This is the mythology that Dontenville studies. He shows the efforts of the Church against diabolic beings which one did not dare to name and which, therefore, it is often very difficult to recognize and to identify. Various names designate the Cursed Hunter of the Nocturnal (or Flying, or Wild)

[1] *La Mythologie française* (Paris, 1948), p. 5.

Hunt:[2] he is called Cain in Normandy, Herod in Bresse, Oliferne (Holophernes?) in Franche-Comté, "King David" in the Pays de Retz, "King Solomon" in the Basque country, etc.; but the oldest term known is Hellequin (Hallequin in Ardennes, Hannequet in Argonne, Hannequin in Anjou, Ankin or Héletchin in other places). Dontenville gives documents which range from the end of the eleventh century (in Normandy) to the beginning of the fourteenth century. An interpolation from the *Roman de Fauvel* mentions "un grand jaïant" of whom Chaillou de Pestain says: I believe it was Hellequin. A miniature painter represented it as a devil wearing horns. Dontenville explains that Hellequin means the train or retinue of the Devil (and the word *mesnie*, which is added, simply stresses the notion of *suite*). In Canto XXI of the *Inferno* Dante calls one of the demons Alichino. But the Wild Hunter is called Artus (Artu, Artui, etc.) and this character is also condemned by the Church, as are Hellequin, Herod, Cain, the "baron d'Aigremont," and others. Another name for the Cursed Hunter is Gallari (Galerie, Gayère, Valory). Who is he? Dontenville thinks that Galleri might designate Alaric, the Visigoth who, as an Arian, was considered a pagan by the Roman Catholics. In any case, the Devil, the Giant, who is sometimes called Meron, Mauri, Moran (for Moor is taken as meaning pagan), is also designated by the name Gargantua. And this character is the son of Belenus, who was the god of the Gauls, and is the equivalent of Apollo.

Let us say here that the famous mare which carries Grantgosier and Galemelle from the Orient to the Occident has solar characteristics. And this brings us to the horse Bayart. This horse is *fae*, enchanted. The *Chanson de Maugis* says:

Un dragon l'engendra ileuc en un serpent.

It narrates how Maugis, with the help of Oriande, went to the island of Boucault where he dressed as a devil, cast a magic spell on the devil, Raouart, killed the serpent guarding the rock, and thus won the good steed Bayart. Here we can add to Professor Dontenville's account that, according to an excellent article by Miss H. Newstead,[3] Oriande is Morgain la Fée, whose traditional home is Mongibel or Mt. Etna. For M. Dontenville, the struggle between Charlemagne and Bayart represents the struggle of Christians against pagans. Moreover, Bayart, whose coat is brown or russet, has been dyed white by Maugis, the magician, and has solar characteristics; it can be compared to the Schimmel of the Germans. Let us note that, in the Jura, it is also known as "cheval Gauvin." May we here recall that Gauvain has solar traits?

In his earlier book, Dontenville shows that there is a connection between Gargantua and the dragon, the latter representing the spirit of evil. He points out that, for the masses, the feeling of fear was translated into the belief in the existence of harmful monsters.[4] These were then imagined to be conquered by heroes

[2] I believe I see a reference to that Hunt in a novel by George Sand, *Les Maîtres-sonneurs*, troisième veillée (Bruxelles, 1853), I, 58-59: "Cette musique ... me parut endiablée."

[3] "The Traditional Background of *Partonopeus de Blois*," *PMLA*, LXI (1946), 916-946. I do not know whether Professor Dontenville would accept this identification, as I do. May I also say that I make a few reservations about some points discussed by Professor Dontenville? May I note that there remain doubts about Tervagant (cf. H. Grégoire, "L'étymologie de Tervagant," *Mélanges G. Cohen*, Paris, 1950, pp. 67-74), although I am tempted to agree, on the whole, with Professor Dontenville?

[4] Let us here again refer to the same novel by George Sand, where in the twenty-ninth "veillée" (II, 303), it is said: "on jurait d'y avoir entendu siffler

(among the pagans) or by saints[5] (among the Christians). Thus, after Perseus, St. George, St. Michael, St. Marcel are represented as saving man from beings who threaten him. There is a legend of St. Michael in the Monte Gargano, as well as in the famous mount which was called Tumba, then Gargan, and finally was named after St. Michael. Thus the legend of Gargantua which Rabelais utilized in his novel is seen to be of great significance. We must be most grateful to Professor Dontenville[6] for having revealed to us the whole background of fundamental traditions without the knowledge of which we would not understand the origins of *Pantagruel*.

MARCEL FRANÇON

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HUMANITAS CHRISTIANA, GESCHICHTE DES CHRISTLICHEN HUMANISMUS. By Josef Sellmair. Munich: Ehrenwirth, 1950. 519 p.

This book is of direct concern to all students of Italian culture—of Italian literary culture in particular—who will undoubtedly be stimulated by the way in which Professor Sellmair frames the Christian variety of Italian Renaissance humanism within the whole context of the intellectual history of the European Occident.

Professor Sellmair is the author of a survey of Jansenistic education, *Pädagogik des Jansenismus* (Donauwörth, 1932), the intrinsic value of which is enhanced by the scarcity of discussions of that significant phase of the "Catholic Reformation" of seventeenth-century France. He has also written a deeply moving volume entitled *Mensch in der Tragik*, now in its third edition (Krailling, 1948).

Humanitas christiana was composed under circumstances which would have shattered a less steely will than Professor Sellmair's. The first version was destroyed during the night bombings of 1943; the author had to reconstruct the MS from earlier sketches and sparse notes. The book is couched in a literary style of stately perfection, and animated through and through by an intense idealism. Sellmair fully measures up to his theme. His prose often rises to splendid coruscations, and shows, in its spontaneous blend of the positive and the poetical, that ratiocinative and lyrical tones are not constantly and necessarily antithetical.

There are two preliminary chapters on the growth of Christian humanism and on humanism and *Humanität* (this term is untranslatable, since connotations peculiar to the German eighteenth century cluster about it). The historical part

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la cocadrille dans les temps d'épidémies. Vous savez que la cocadrille est une manière de lézard..." This seems to be the cocodrille (i.e. crocodile) mentioned by Maurice Scève.

[5] Clément Marot alludes to the snakes of which St. Clément freed Metz (*Enfer*, lines 353-4).

[6] We must emphasize how rich the books of Professor Dontenville are. They open up a whole field of investigation and bring new perspectives. The more one studies them, the more one is overwhelmed by the importance of this "French" mythology. One feels that, for the first time, aspects of life, states of civilization, forms of beliefs, profound meanings of ceremonies, rites, and customs are beginning to be revealed. The books of Dontenville also contain comments which show him to be deeply attached to his country and to its traditions. It does one good to read remarks which betray a courageous, vigorous, and independent man. He alludes to the frightening recent history with its mixture of shame on the part of the defeatists and moral strength on the part of the people who resisted against a vile domination. He even tells a fable about Godesberg and the Drachenfels, and one cannot help remembering the infamy of those days.

proper begins with a depiction of the development of *humanitas* in Graeco-Roman antiquity (Socrates and Plato, Stoa and Cicero, Horace and Virgil), leading to a synopsis of the attainments and limitations of the ethical world of antiquity. Chapters on the encounter between Christianity and paganism in the Orient and the Occident follow (Justinus, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, the Cappadocians, on the one hand—Tertullian, Lactantius, Jerome, on the other). A series of brilliant sections is devoted to the spiritual progenitors of the West (Augustine, Boethius, Cassiodorus, St. Benedict, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville), while a "splinter chapter" shows the significance and value of the *fari posse*, i.e., rhetoric. Then Sellmair delineates the impact of the idea of Rome on the Occident (*Roma christiana*, Sidonius Apollinaris, Scots and Anglo-Saxons, Caesarius of Arles) and conducts us through mediaeval humanism (Carolingian Renaissance, Christian Latin poetry, the humanistic idea in early scholasticism: Abelard, St. Thomas, Dante), through Renaissance humanism (Petrarch, Rienzo, Machiavelli), German humanism (Cusanus, Geert, Grote), up to Erasmus and Thomas More. By way of contrast, we are given insight into Luther's *diastasis*, i.e., his antihumanism. The humanism of the Counter-Reformation and the pedagogy of the Jesuits are next analyzed. Spanish and French humanism are taken up in turn. After a glance at transitional figures (Balde, Grimmelshausen, Comenius, Leibnitz), the spotlight is turned on Winckelmann, Herder, Humboldt, Goethe, Hölderlin, and then on major ninenteenth-century figures like J. M. Sailer, the romanticists, Martin Deutinger, Stifter, Jakob Burckhardt, Cardinal Newman. Signally important are the two final chapters, "The Crisis of Humanism" and "Neo-Humanism." They constitute a kind of scalpeling in depth, a surgical probing into the open wounds of modern civilization.

It is impossible here to do justice to Professor Sellmair's volume. Agreement with it, dissent from it, depend on one's religious convictions. Sellmair leaves no room for doubt as to where he stands. Members of faiths other than the Una Sancta will demur to more than one of his assertions. But no one can deny Sellmair's impassioned sincerity, his scholarship, his nobility as a human soul concerned with the agonies of fellow souls.

Technically, the book is open to some objections. Machiavelli (contrary to Alderisio's whitewashings) clearly does not belong in the story of *humanitas christiana*, except as a foil; it may be doubted whether he belongs in the story of humanism in a more formal rhetorical sense (but see Butterfields' *Machiavelli's Statecraft*). One may question Shakespeare's inclusion and the exclusion of Vico. It is hard to "swallow" the annexation of Goethe to Christian humanism (except on the hypothesis of endorsing a very loose, very secular, quite wiredrawn acceptance of the term Christian humanism). One may dispute Hölderlin's qualifications for being added to the fold. But Sellmair's book remains important and deserves careful consideration. The author apologizes for the defects of his bibliography. The reader, however, will find therein many references to German and generally to European items which do not appear in earlier "musterings" of the "literature" of the subject.

ELIO GIANTURCO

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JAMES JOYCE. By Italo Svevo. Translated by Stanislaus Joyce. Milan: Officine Grafiche "Esperia" (for New Directions, New York), 1950. 68 p., unnumbered.

Some important studies have appeared recently that shed light on Joyce's period

of residence in Trieste, his reputation in Italy, and his relationship with the Triestine novelist Italo Svevo. We refer to Eugenio Montale's article in *La Fiera Letteraria*, Livia Veneziani Svevo's *Vita di mio marito* (Trieste, 1950) (see my review in *Italica*, XXXIX, 1952, 61-63), the correspondence between Joyce and Svevo published with an introduction by Harry Levin in *Inventario*, II (1949), 106-138, and a few notes in Bernard Gherbrant's *James Joyce, sa vie, son œuvre, son rayonnement* (Paris, 1949). An Italian dissertation, Bruno Maier's *Profilo della critica su Italo Svevo (1892-1951)* (Trieste, 1951), also deals briefly with this subject, but Maier is entirely unaware of the book we are reviewing.

This slender volume, translated by James Joyce's young brother, Stanislaus, presents a lecture delivered by Svevo to the "Convegno" of Milan in 1927; the lecture is a reworking and elaboration of an article contributed by Svevo to *La Fiera Letteraria* (March 27, 1927) under the title "Ricordi su James Joyce."

The publication is a very timely one, but poses at once an enigma. It appears almost jointly with the translator's rather controversial *Recollections of James Joyce* (New York, 1950), which was originally printed in *Letteratura*, V (1941), No. 3, pp. 25-35, and No. 4, pp. 23-35, under the title "Ricordi di James Joyce," and has also appeared in the *Hudson Review*, II, 485-514, under the title, "James Joyce: A Memoir." What puzzles us and strikes our attention at once is that, in this account of Joyce's sojourn in Trieste, Stanislaus does not speak of Svevo at all and only mentions Joyce's association with Alessandro Francini-Bruni and Carlo Linati. This silence about Joyce's friendship with Svevo appears all the more conspicuous when we remember the affectionate tone of Stanislaus' introduction, dated 1932, to the American edition of *As Man Grows Older*.

Joyce arrived in Trieste in 1904 after a brief stay in Pola, with the manuscripts for *Chamber Music* and a part of *Dubliners* in his pocket. Many of his works down to *Ulysses* must be considered to have been conceived in Trieste. It is unnecessary to repeat here that Joyce was exceedingly well versed in Italian letters, especially Cavalcanti, Petrarch, Dante, Giordano Bruno, and Vico, and that reflections of many Italian idioms and twists of speech can be found in *Ulysses*. The Trieste period was one of the happiest of his life, and it was from that city, a rather detached and independent place itself, that he was able to contemplate with even greater detachment his native Ireland.

Svevo examines Joyce as a man and artist with warmth and keen insight, and no one can deny that he facilitated greatly Joyce's introduction to Italian literary circles. However, the friendship was well reciprocated, for it was Joyce who brought Svevo to the attention of such critics and editors as Valery Larbaud, Benjamin Crémieux, and Mlle Monnier.

His lecture reveals Svevo to us as a sensitive but modest critic: "I am not a critic, and when I read these notes over again, I doubt whether I have given a clear idea of this novel [*Ulysses*]. It seems to me sufficient praise of it to say that it is the most significant novel that has appeared at the beginning of this century. It was not in my mind to settle what place in the world of letters should be assigned to Joyce's work nor trace the relationship with what has preceded it. Like any simple-minded reader, I have just tried to get you to share my admiration."

It would be fruitful and rewarding if scholars of Joyce and Svevo would get in touch with the few remaining persons who knew them in Trieste and seek out material to amplify and elucidate our portrait of an important literary relationship and friendship.

KARL LUDWIG SELIG

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La Littérature comparée. By F.-M. Guyard. Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1951. 126 p. (Collection "Que sais-je?")

Bibliographie générale de littérature comparée. Années 1949-1950. Paris: Boivin, n. d. 46 p.

It is significant that only in France can books outlining the general field, objectives, and methods of comparative literature be addressed to the intelligent general reader. In other countries either the group of such readers is too small (as in the United States) or the interest in the subject is too slight (as in England). In France, however, Mr. Guyard's book is the second such work to appear in a collection of popular treatises on learned subjects. Paul Van Tieghem's *La Littérature comparée* appeared in the Collection Armand Colin in 1931, and now, exactly twenty years later, another book with the same title has been published in the "Que sais-je?" series.

In a sense, Mr. Guyard's book may be regarded almost as a large-scale revision of the earlier manual rather than a completely new work. Though there are, of course, certain outstanding studies which must be cited in any discussion of the field, the agreement between the two books in the choice of illustrations goes far beyond what might be explained on this basis, as a comparison, for example, of the two accounts of the distortions and omissions to be found in translations will readily show. Sometimes Van Tieghem's views are deliberately revised. Guyard explains, for example, the distinction between comparative literature, involving only two terms, and general literature, involving more than two; but he does not himself make the distinction. Here we have a clear case of progress; for there is certainly no need to put a study of Milton in French literature in an entirely different category from a study of Milton in the Romance literatures.

In one classification, unfortunately, a needless and nonsignificant distinction is kept. The first three subheads of the chapter on influences and success are (1) "Ecrivains français à l'étranger," (2) "Ecrivains étrangers en France," and (3) "Influences entre littératures étrangères." Thus three similar topics—Molière's influence on Congreve, Shakespeare's influence on Hugo, and Shakespeare's influence on Schiller—would be placed in classes 1, 2, 3, respectively. But surely the Englishman must be allowed to give English literature the same central position which the French critic assigns to French literature. He will accordingly classify these same topics as 2, 1, 1. By the same principle, the German will make them 3, 3, 2, and the Italian will put them all in class 3. In a field of international scholarship we cannot have a system of classification which depends on the nationality of the classifier rather than on the nature of the items under discussion. That way madness lies. The fact that the book is intended for popular reading is no excuse. There is no reason to confuse the beginner with meaningless distinctions, and one of the real services which a casual acquaintance with the nature of comparative literature might render to the general reader in any country would be to weaken his conviction that his own literature is central and the rest are peripheral.

Except for this nationalistic bias, the discussion is admirably organized and presented. Two features are especially well conceived and useful to the student. Mr. Guyard is careful to indicate, sometimes by tables, which topics and fields have been fairly thoroughly investigated and which still offer large uncharted areas. Furthermore, he makes his discussions of the different types of research more specific and illuminating by giving a resumé (500-750 words) of an outstanding study of each type.

The *Bibliographie générale de littérature comparée* for 1949-1950 is simply a reissue, in a separate pamphlet, of the eight quarterly bibliographies published during that period in the *Revue de littérature comparée*. The only modification is that the items are now numbered in one series throughout and that a general index is supplied and keyed to this numbering. A special introductory paragraph is appropriately devoted to an account of the Baldensperger-Friederich *Bibliography of Comparative Literature*.

CALVIN S. BROWN

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ASPECTS LITTÉRAIRES DU MYSTICISME PHILOSOPHIQUE ET L'INFLUENCE DE BOEHME ET DE SWEDENBORG AU DÉBUT DU ROMANTISME: WILLIAM BLAKE, NOVALIS, BALLANCHE. By Jacques Roos. Strasbourg: P. H. Heitz, 1951. 460 p.

Professor Roos's study is valuable in calling attention to an aspect of the late eighteenth century which is too often forgotten or overlooked by those who are inclined to draw hard and fast lines between literary periods and national literatures, viz., that mystical tendencies were neither dormant nor dead and that there was a direct and clearly accountable relationship among the manifestations of mysticism in Western European countries. Even so, the association of Blake, Novalis, and Ballanche under one cover seems, as M. Roos admits, "une étrange coïncidence." According to his thesis, these three writers are representatives of a common mystical impulse which spread over Europe in the latter half of the eighteenth century. This impulse M. Roos traces to two sources: (1) the writings of Swedenborg, Boehme, and occasionally Plato and Plotinus; (2) a general spiritual atmosphere. After a brief and necessarily too general discussion, confined primarily to France, the second of these sources is seldom considered. Nor do Plato and Plotinus (why only one of the Neoplatonists is included is not clear) figure importantly in the discussion. Essentially, Professor Roos's study is confined to an examination of the influence of Swedenborg and Boehme upon certain philosophical and political ideas in Blake, Novalis, and Ballanche.

Such an approach is liable to certain perhaps unavoidable weaknesses. In the first place, the restriction of the examination to some five or six general topics in all three men (the chapter headings and subheadings are almost paralleled in the three main sections of the book) is likely to leave the impression that the three are closer in thought and ideal than they perhaps are. In the second place, the concentration upon the influence of Swedenborg and Boehme is likely to overemphasize their importance.

In the case of Blake, at least, this is certainly true. The consideration of Plato's influence will illustrate. A significant part of M. Roos's argument concerning the major tenets of Blake's system is developed around a logical inconsistency. Although he often admits that many of Blake's basic concepts are Platonic or Neoplatonic in origin, M. Roos maintains that Blake's avowed hositility for Greek art would have precluded his borrowing directly from the Platonists; but M. Roos has either ignored or overlooked an analogous difficulty in the consideration of Blake's borrowing from Swedenborg, for whom Blake had a strong antipathy as early as 1790, before the composition of any significant Prophetic Book. Furthermore, Blake names or refers to Plato twenty-six times in the Keynes edition, and he does not always speak deprecatingly of Plato; as late as 1808, in the annotations to Reynolds' *Discourses*, Blake linked Plato with Milton in support of his views on vision and revelation. If mere disparagement were enough to dismiss a possible influence, Swedenborg certainly could not qualify. An ex-

tremely interesting change may be observed in Blake's annotations to two of Swedenborg's books: the comments (*ca.* 1788) on the *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* are commendatory in the main, whereas the notes (*ca.* 1790) on the *Divine Providence* are almost entirely disapproving. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (*ca.* 1793) declares that "Swedenborg's writings are a recapitulation of all superficial opinions." And the writings after 1793 (including all the major Prophetic Books) contain little evidence of any real interest in Swedenborg. Blake had moved on to new fields.

M. Roos maintains, moreover, that there is nothing in Blake's writings which indicates that he knew Plato. Yet several of Blake's philosophical ideas, central in M. Roos's argument, are far more fully developed in readily available translations of the Neoplatonists than in Swedenborg or Boehme. Two illustrations must suffice. M. Roos makes a great deal of a doctrine of "evolution" in Blake's theory of the fall and the regeneration of man. In putting together the main outlines of this concept of "evolution," M. Roos finds it necessary to combine doctrinal elements from both Swedenborg and Boehme. But Plotinus's theory of emanation (the word became one of Blake's favorites) contains all the essential features included in M. Roos's discussion—the descent to materiality as a gradual dispersion or separation and the regeneration as a return to spiritual oneness. Plato's theory of the One and the Many is, obviously, the origin of the doctrine.

The theory of ideas receives a similar treatment. M. Roos observes that, although several passages in Blake seem to indicate that he knew Plato's theory of ideas, because of a "personal aversion" to Greek art Blake must have taken his theory from Berkeley, Swedenborg, or Boehme instead of directly from Plato or the Neoplatonists. The inconsistency is obvious. It may be worthy of comment that Blake did not read the *Siris*, Berkeley's only Platonic book, until about 1820, long after the completion of the Prophetic Books. This is not to say, of course, that Blake did not get certain elements of his system from Swedenborg or Boehme (other critics, notably Mark Schorer, have written at some length about the influence of both on Blake); it is only to point out that the essential elements of Blake's doctrines were readily available in the Neoplatonists, whom he read during the 1790s as he was poring over the doctrines which constitute the framework for the Prophetic Books.

M. Roos's book is both interesting and rewarding. But, as far as Blake is concerned, the study is perhaps more significant in its consideration of his thought in relation to a general spiritual atmosphere than in its attempt to establish Swedenborg and Boehme as the sources for the main outlines of his philosophical system.

GEORGE M. HARPER

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VARIA

EUGEN LERCH, 1889-1952

Eugen Lerch was born December 25, 1889 in Berlin and died November 16, 1925 in Mainz. He was, as it happened, the last pupil of the great syntactician of the French language, Adolf Tobler, and also the first disciple of the stylistic psychologist, Karl Vossler. His lifelong work on his *Historische französische Syntax*, unfortunately never completed, was often interrupted by literary excursions into the *Chanson de Roland*, Molière, Romain Rolland, or Lessing as a detractor of French classicism.

It is not for studies like the last mentioned that we believe Lerch to belong also to the domain of comparative literature. His contribution to comparativism was the recognition that two literatures or single examples of two literatures cannot be compared unless the different spirits of these literatures have become clear to the investigator. This difference can be brought home to the comparative scholar only through the medium of the respective languages. Thus, following the concept of Humboldt, Vossler, and Spitzer of the "interior form of language," Lerch tried to come to a systematic idiomatology of languages. He explained his idea with a wealth of examples from French and Spanish in "Französische Sprache and Wesensart" and "Spanische Sprache und Wesensart" published in Hartig-Schellberg's *Handbuch der Frankreichkunde*, I (1928), and *Handbuch der Spanienkunde* (1932), respectively. In contradistinction to the goal of modern structural linguistics, Lerch's aim was not the grammatical "Gestalt" of a language but the uniqueness of its idioms of all kinds (sound clusters, morphemes, syntagmata, vocabulary, phraseology); these reveal psychological attitudes which reappear in analogous literary features. May the example of Eugen Lerch encourage literary historians to continue his methods in their fields or, at least, to utilize the bridge between language and literature which he has provided. In so doing they will come to appreciate the unusual erudition of Eugen Lerch and his originality as an interpreter of language, civilization, and literature, and to see in this keen critic an unswerving believer in the primacy of spiritual forces in the domain of culture.

H. H.

ANNOUNCEMENT

A Colloquium on Islamic Culture in Its Relation to the Contemporary World, sponsored by the Library of Congress and Princeton University, will be held in September 1953. Thirty eminent Muslim scholars and intellectual leaders from the Middle East and Asia have been invited to participate, along with a similar number of American delegates. Papers and discussions will be concerned with aspects of the three following fields: Classical Elements in Islamic Culture, Islamic Law and Society, Intellectual and Spiritual Movements in Islam Today. Meetings will be held at Princeton September 8-17, and in Washington September 17-19, 1953.

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